EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS: DARK EARTH, CONQUEST EARTH

33 GAME REVIEWS

PC GAMES™

CONNECTING GAMERS TO GAMES



Ritual's Original

SiN

EXCLUSIVE!

Outta the MUD!

17 Online RPGs

GAME REVIEWS:

Starfleet Academy
Shadow Warrior
NHL 98
Resident Evil

TECHNOBABBLE:

Win 2000: The Death of DOS
Three New 3D Cards

QUAKE 2

More DOOM from the Wizards of id!

3D GAME PATCHES

FACE-LIFT YOUR FAVORITES

An IDG Communications Publication

November 1997
$7.99 Canada $8.99

0 71896 47890 7 11

www.pcgames.com

Welcome to Oddworld.

In a dog-eat-dog world where escape
is your only option, your ride wants you off his back.

Enemies that sleep. A hero that chants, and an untrusty steed that's a pain in the butt.

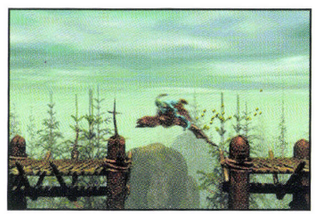
Sound Odd? Welcome to Oddworld.



need a ride?



giddy-up.

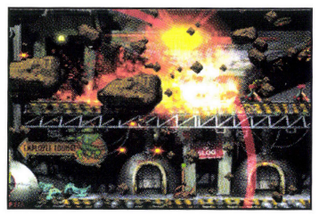


hold on to your loincloth!

In a world run by meat barons and corporate scum,
your entire race is pie filling.

Escape from the daily grind and seek your destiny. Savior. Or salami.

Sound Odd? Welcome to Oddworld.



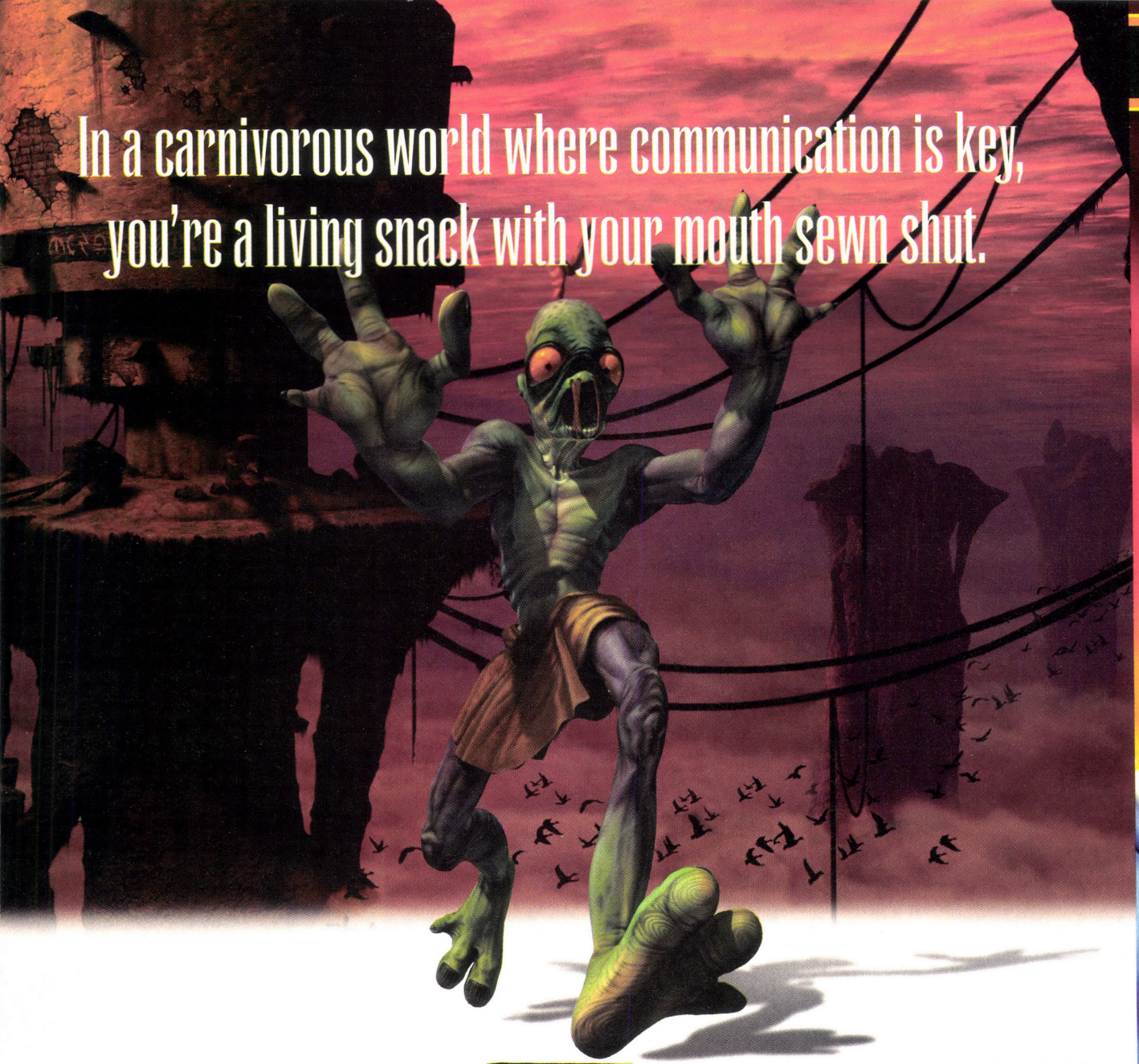
ow!



owww!



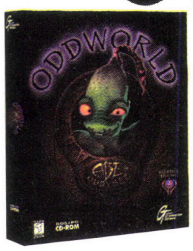
OWWWWWW!!!



In a lush world of diabolical danger, you're Abe... the skinny guy with no weapons.

Your mission is simple...run, jump and talk your way out of this ravaged world.

You heard me... Talk! With just your keyboard (or gamepad) and your brain. It's called Gamespeak.



And when you've got an entire race to save from the deli counter it could come in handy.

For Odd's sake, do something different. Chow down on ODDWORLD's pure nugget of surreal, sensory overload gaming.

You'll never be hungry again.

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

GAMING GETS ODD

A.L.I.V.E.
Aware Lifeforms In Virtual Entertainment

Designed for Microsoft Windows 95

TEEN AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Strategy Guide available from GW Press

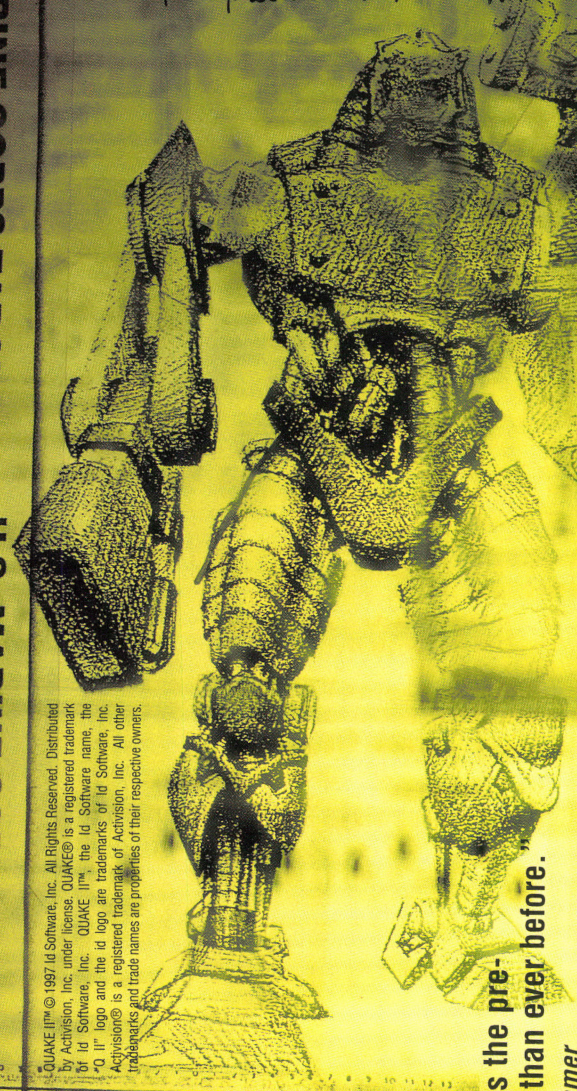
ODDWORLD INHABITANTS
www.oddworld.com

WWW.GTGAMES.COM

GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com

Oddworld Inhabitants Abe's Oddysee TM & © 1997 Oddworld Inhabitants, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Published and distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. Microsoft® and Windows® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All other trademarks are property of their respective companies.

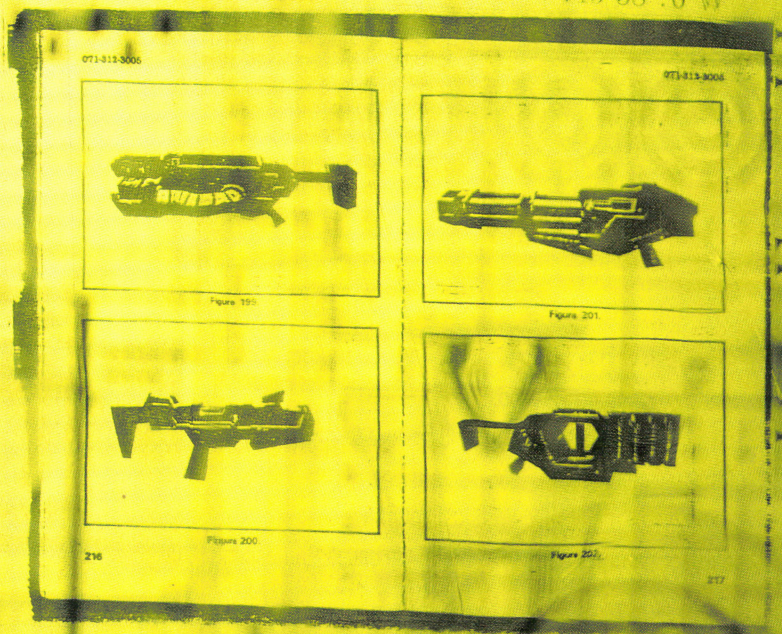
19:42 You learn the hard way in the outer sector... Like never get into a drinking match with a three-headed Bvkan. Never assume a Strogg is dead even when he's nothing but bloody scraps of shrapnel. And never go to bed with a Rabaul no matter how many breasts she has.



19:11

THE LINE BETWEEN MAN AND MACHINE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ERASED.

Blood vessels and wires should never have been crossed. Souls and circuitry, brain stems and processors.



"Quake II will establish id as the pre-eminent blastmasters more than ever before."
—PC Gamer

www.idsoftware.com

QUAKE II™ © 1997 Id Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by Activision, Inc. under license. QUAKE® is a registered trademark of Id Software, Inc. QUAKE II™, the Id Software name, the "Q II" logo and the id logo are trademarks of Id Software, Inc. Activision® is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. All other trademarks and trade names are properties of their respective owners.

ACTIVISION

id

LINE NO.		EVALUATION
1	Large, complex missions	What you do in one level could affect another. One false move and you could alert security, flood a passageway, or worse.
2	Superior artificial intelligence	The enemy is far from stupid. They will evade attacks, maneuver into strategic attack locations, and hunt your ass down.
3	Intense environments	Man gun turrets. Blow up subways. Smash glass. Toss grenades with perfect control. Duck to evade hits. Give them Hell.

U.S. MARINE CORPS TARGET

U.S. MARINE CORPS 25-METER ZEROING PROCEDURES

(BY FOLLOWING THE STEPS BELOW AND ESTABLISHING A ZERO AT 25 METERS, YOUR

REAR SIGHT

FRONT SIGHT


0 00
m 0 00 0 04 0 08 0 12 0 16 0 20 0 24 0 28 0 32 0 36 0 40 0 44 0 48 0 52 0 59
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
18:03 Grotesque images of Strogg have been filling my sleep at night. Their metallic spines jutting awkwardly through muscle, skin and connective tissue, masks of human facial skin smeared and bonded to their cyber-alloy heads, crude but powerful weapons jammed into oozing, gaping sockets. Thank God the endless sleep ahead is dreamless.
17:05 It's either us or them this time. We lose, and we all end up barbecued on the grill of some unholy mechanized carnivore. We win, and the human Coalition of Man can start rebuilding the cities on Mars, Olympus, even Earth. Who knows - they might even get the old interplanetary football league going again. God, I miss Monday Night Football.
H I K L G M E F O P Q R D C S S
"Quake II, without a doubt, the game of E3." 39
— Computer Gaming World
Coming Soon on Windows® 95/NT CD-ROM
QUAKE II™



3Dfx™ interactive

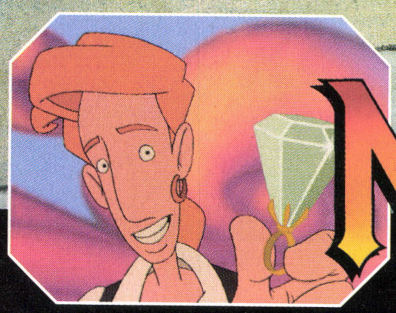
Copyright © 1997 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo and Voodoo Graphics and Voodoo Rush are trademarks of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. Images courtesy of Electronic Arts, Jane's Combat Simulations, Bungie Software, GT Interactive and Crystal Dynamics. Information Group, Ltd. ORIGIN is an Electronic Arts company. FIFA Road To World Cup '98 images are trademarks of Electronic Arts © 1997 Electronic Arts. FIFA Official licensed product of the FIFA World Cup France 98. © The France 98 Emblem and Official The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company (in Canada, Goodyear Canada, Inc.) Used with permission. RC is a registered trademark of Royal Crown Company, Inc. Special thanks to Gold Coast Motor Events Co. for providing materials for use in Andretti Racing. Crystal Dynamics © 1997 Crystal Dynamics. www.3dfx.com



Get Voodoo.

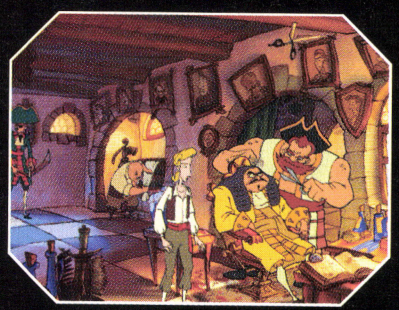
Myth images are trademarks of Bungie Software © 1997 Bungie Software. Longbow 2 and Wing Commander Prophecy images are trademarks of ORIGIN Systems, Inc. and Electronic Arts. © 1997 ORIGIN Systems, Inc. Jane's is a registered trademark of Jane's Mascot are copyrights and trademarks of ISL. Nuclear Strike images are trademarks of Electronic Arts © 1997 Electronic Arts. Andretti Racing images are trademarks of Electronic Arts © 1997 Electronic Arts. Goodyear (and winged foot design) are trademarks of Special thanks to all of the sponsors of Andretti Racing. All sponsored products and company names are the property of their respective owners. Bug Rider images are trademarks of GT Interactive © 1997 GT Interactive. Pandemonium 2 images are trademarks of

Introducing the only pirate adventure that asks the question: What's sharper, your sword or your wit?



THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND™











Presenting the long-awaited third installment in LucasArts' classic adventure series, Monkey Island. With features like 30-plus hours of gameplay, 8,000 lines of hilarious dialogue, oodles of challenging puzzles, high-resolution graphics, film-quality animation and a few surprise celebrity voices. Not to mention vegetarian cannibals and a guy named Snugglecakes. So get ready to embark on a rollicking, swashbuckling graphic adventure where the seagulls have better aim than the pirates, and the sharpest weapon is your wit. **For Windows 95 CD-ROM**

Check out the playable demo in select magazines or download it from our Web site at www.lucasarts.com

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

LUCAS Arts

© 1997 LucasArts Entertainment Company. All Rights Reserved. The Curse of Monkey Island is a trademark of LucasArts Entertainment Company. The LucasArts logo is a registered trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd., used under authorization.

PC GAMES

NOVEMBER 1997
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 9

What's Inside

PC Games Online has joined with Happy Puppy and Games Domain to provide even more great gaming coverage! For more details, see www.pcgames.com.

PCGAMES.COM
HAPPY PUPPY GAMES
GamesDomain



Shadow Warrior P.120

FEATURES

RITUAL'S NEW SHOOTER

60 The Wages of SiN
By George T. Chronis
The guys who did Scourge of Armagon know the Quake engine—and they've got unusual ideas for what to do with it. Here's an exclusive look at a new kind of shoot-'em-up.

QUAKE 2!

72 Return of the BFG
By Steve Klett
It's only the most-awaited game of the decade or something. So, wanna know about it? We got a chance to play it and want to tell ya about it.

A NEW KIND OF ONLINE RPG

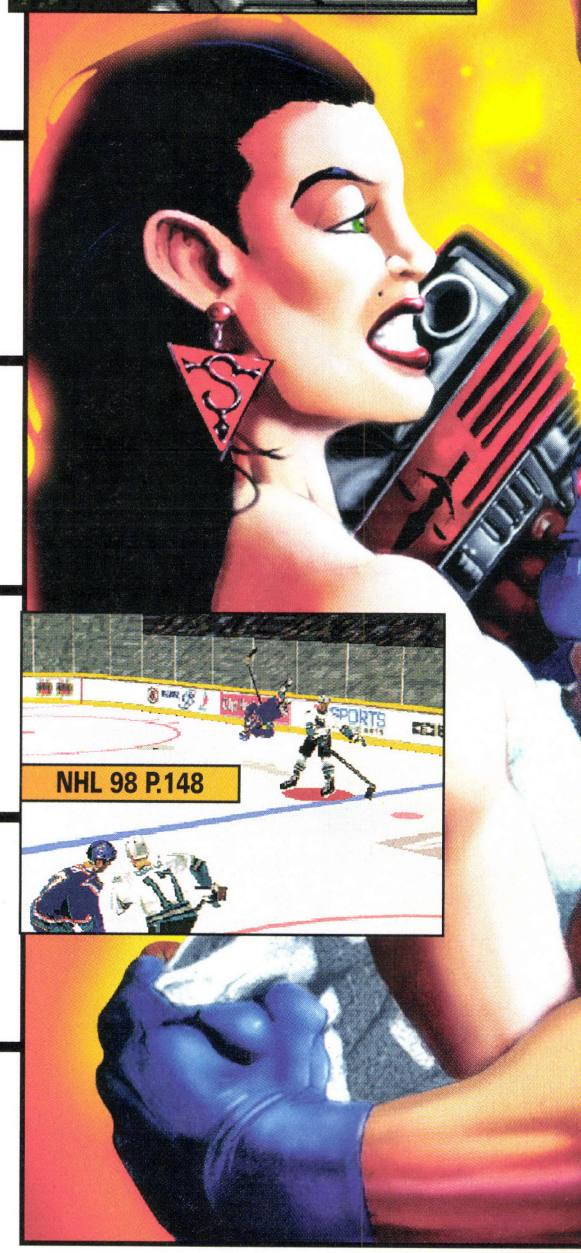
78 Call of the New Worlds
By Barry Brenesal
The new age of online gaming is tailor-made for a new breed of role-playing adventure. We tell you about the exciting new crop of multiplayer RPGs.

KALISTO'S GORGEOUS FANTASY

89 Dark Earth
By Daniel Morris
Fantasy adventures ought to be beautiful, and this one is. Kalisto is finally ready to release its stunning-looking game after three years in the making—check it out.

THE POWER OF 3D PATCHES

98 Old Box, New Game
By Bob Lindstrom
That game you stuck up on your been-there-done-that shelf may have some more plays left in it—if you've got a 3D card. A guide to patchable fun.



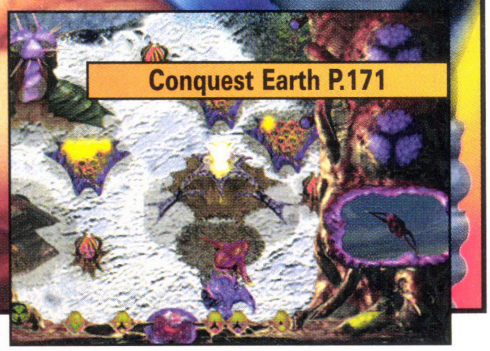
NHL 98 P.148

Connecting Gamers to Games









SNEAK PEEKS

105 Redline: The Continuing Story
108 FireTeam
112 The Golf Pro
114 Aliens Online
118 Seven Kingdoms
119 Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far

REVIEWS

GAME OF THE MONTH
120 Shadow Warrior

ACTION
123 Star Trek: Starfleet Academy
128 Terracide
130 Resident Evil
132 Machine Hunter
133 WarHeads

ADVENTURE
135 Broken Sword

FLY AND DRIVE
138 Forced Alliance

SPORTS
144 Legends '98
147 Worldwide Soccer
148 NHL 98
153 Tennis Elbow, KickOff '97

STRATEGY
156 Birthright
159 Red Alert: The Aftermath, L.E.D. Wars
162 WAR, Inc.
163 Imperialism
165 Outpost 2
166 Constructor
169 Dark Colony
171 Conquest Earth

GAME SHORTS
175 Dr. Drago's Madcap Chase, Yendor 3: The Tyrants of Thaine
176 Cuss Pack, JFIII add-on, Strat-O-Matic 2.0, Chewy: F5
178 Virtual Springfield, Time Warrior
179 Lose Your Marbles, 20th Century Trivia Challenge

DEPARTMENTS

12 EDITOR'S NOTE
Steve Klett

14 PC GAMES.EXE

23 PC GAMES.COM

28 INCOMING!

34 GAMEWIRE
Raven flies to Activision, Dominion marches to Ion Storm, Forsaken morphs into Revenant, and the news never stops.

47 ONLINE-GAME CONNECTION

48 THE PLAYER
Steve Klett
It's that time again: The Player hands out his annual Golden Turkey awards.

54 THE OPPONENT
Blade
Blade says beta testers need to chill out.

198 FACE-OFF
Scarface thinks great games stopped being made in 1989; Wirehead says there are plenty of killer ones coming out today.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

180 We bring you cheats for Carmageddon, Machine Hunter, Gubble, Shadow Warrior, XCar, Tennis Elbow, and this month's Hexen II demo.

TECHNOBABBLE

182 DOES D3D GET IT DONE?
Microsoft would love the industry to herd to Direct3D; developers seem to prefer hardware cards. We look at what really works.

184 THE DEATH OF DOS?
Windows 2000 will bring NT to games and likely spike DOS for good. We examine whether that's good for you.

186 HARDWARE SPOTLIGHT
The latest in 3D cards, speakers, force feedback, and other cool peripherals.

192 S.O.S.
Patrick Marshall
Honest answers to your toughest technical questions.

PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

SEE MORE ONLINE
http://www.pcgames.com







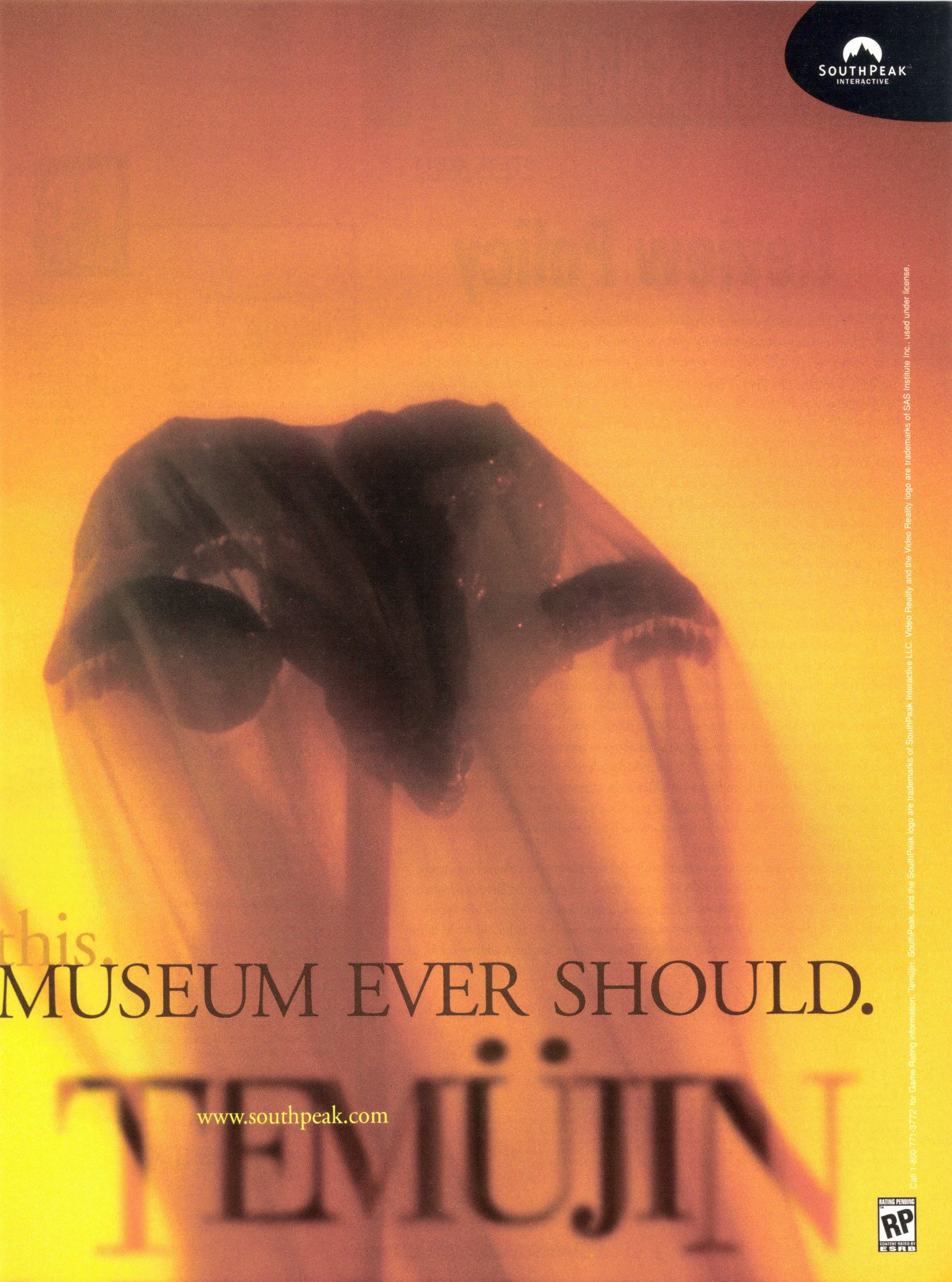


TEMÜJIN™

Temüjin is the world's first game powered by Video Reality™ technology. It's a psychological thriller that'll immerse you in 360° of completely seamless, incredibly realistic, motion picture-quality gaming.

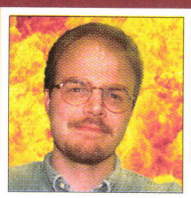
POWERED BY VIDEO REALITY

no museum has ever unveiled an exhibit like NO



Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating information. Temüjin, SouthPeak, and the SouthPeak logo are trademarks of SouthPeak Interactive LLC. Video Reality and the Video Reality logo are trademarks of SAS Institute Inc., used under license.

EDITOR'S NOTE



STEVE KLETT

Review Policy

There's been a lot of discussion online over the last few months concerning whether it's okay to review games before they're in final shrink-wrapped condition. Many game magazines claim to only review final, shrink-wrapped product; yet it's often plain by the contents of their books and the games on shelves that this isn't 100 percent true. *PC Games*' review policy is as follows: We evaluate games for review when those responsible for making them say they're ready. Much of the time, this means final shrink-wrapped product.

However, most companies send out very late betas marked as reviewable code, or, at the very least, gold masters—which are the CDs sent out for duplication, and thus are the same as the final product, sans pretty wrappings. We do consider these for review. Nine times out of ten, a late beta we've reviewed can be cross-checked for bug fixes and such with a gold master before a given issue is put to bed.

This is done to put reviews on the shelves closer to the time games actually ship, so you have more information with which to make crucial buying decisions. With the magazine's lead time of roughly two months, reviews of current games wouldn't appear in print until two months after the games' release if we only reviewed boxed copies. Based on feedback from reader focus groups, we think that's too long to expect you to wait.

We will not, of course, review a game that's missing important features, such as a manual or final AI. And we reject games sent to us for review quite often because we don't agree that they're ready. Plus, a game is never reviewed without the express permission of the developer.

The perils of reviewing gold masters are mostly on the publishing side. Occasionally, a game will miss its ship date due to a change in publisher (Dark Earth, for example), or be held up due to the complexities involved with pulling off a simultaneous worldwide release (like Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny). In such cases, the code doesn't change, just the names on the box.

PC Games has never claimed its review policy to be otherwise, and we've noted bugs when appropriate. You'll now find a brief statement regarding our review policy in the section preceding our reviews (page 102). And, in the future, we'll be noting more consistently reviews written on late betas and gold masters.

Reviews are a subjective process to begin with, and our grades and opinions are merely guidance as to what we, as fellow hardcore gamers, think of a game's fun factor. Ultimately, it's up to you, the reader, to decide what's acceptable review practice. What do you think: Should only shrink-wrapped, boxed copies of games be reviewed—no matter what the delay? Or would you rather have more timely reviews? Let us know via the email address below, or by regular-old snail mail.

Steve Klett

Steve Klett
Editor in Chief
sklett@pcgames.com

PC Games (ISSN 1089-3695), Connecting Gamers to Games, is published 10 times per year for $18.00 a year (magazine only) by PC Games Publishing, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Ste. 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; (415) 349-7100; An IDG Company: The World's Leader In Information Services On Information Technology. The PC Games name and logo are trademarks of PC Games Publishing. Periodicals postage paid at San Mateo, CA, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PC GAMES, P.O. Box 59710, Boulder, CO 80328-9710. Change of Address: Please send old label and new address to PC GAMES, P.O. Box 59710, Boulder, CO 80328-9710. GST 131 304 347. Foreign and Canadian orders must be prepaid in U.S. dollars on a U.S. bank and must include $25/year additional for shipping (air delivery).
No part of this publication may be printed or reproduced without written permission from the publisher. *PC Games* makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of articles published in the magazine and assumes no responsibility for damages as a result of errors or omissions. PRODUCED IN USA.

PC GAMES

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER — *Gini Talmadge*

EDITORIAL

EDITOR IN CHIEF — *Steve Klett*
ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR — *Corey Cohen*
FEATURES EDITOR — *Don St. John*
NEWS & TECHNOLOGY EDITOR — *George T. Chronis*
SENIOR REVIEWS/DISC EDITOR — *Rob Smith*
COPY EDITOR — *Karen Eng*
ASSISTANT EDITOR — *Daniel Morris*
ASSISTANT DISC PRODUCER — *Christopher Tou*

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Barry Brenesal, Jason D'Aprile, David Gerding, Bob Lindstrom, Peter Olafson

ONLINE

ONLINE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER — *Marcale Wallace*
WEB PRODUCER — *Nash Werner*
ASSISTANT ONLINE EDITOR — *Joe McCloud*

DESIGN/PRODUCTION

ART DIRECTOR — *Bruce Gardner*
SENIOR DESIGNER — *Katrin Auch*
PRODUCTION MANAGER — *Deena Patel*

INTERNS

PRODUCTION INTERN — *Susanna Maier*
EDITORIAL INTERN — *Amy Crigger*

MANUFACTURING

DIRECTOR OF MANUFACTURING — *Fran Fox*
MANUFACTURING MANAGER — *Lynn Luis*

CIRCULATION

DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION — *Marcia Newlin*
SUBSCRIPTION SPECIALIST — *Tomoko Negishi*
CIRCULATION/DISTRIBUTION SPECIALIST — *Natale Russo*
SINGLE-COPY-SALES MANAGEMENT — *Crown Communications (516) 328-1057*
SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE — *(800) 688-4575 pcgamessubs@pcgames.com*
LIST MANAGEMENT — *Dan Chupka IDG List Services (888) 434-5478 ext. 826*

BPA INTERNATIONAL

PC GAMES BUSINESS

EXEC. ASST. TO PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER — *Audrey Cree*
VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES — *Christine Y. Yam*
VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS — *Brian F. Sours*
MARKETING DIRECTOR — *Sandy Rodrigues*
SR. FINANCIAL ANALYST — *Leona Ching*
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS/I.S. — *Nancy Durlester*
OFFICE SVCS. SUPERVISOR/NETWORK ADMIN. — *Rob Rubright*
HELP DESK SPECIALIST — *Glen Bourne*
HELP DESK SPECIALIST — *John Tan*

IDG INTERNATIONAL DATA GROUP


F-22
RAPTOR™
NOVALOGIC®
LOCKHEED MARTIN

PC GAMES.EXE

27 GREAT DEMOS

Complete list on page 17

See that number? We've collected 27 great game demos for you to pore over this coming month. Topping the bill is Raven Software's return to the Hexen universe with a sequel that's been eagerly anticipated since the first screenshots were revealed. Here it is—there's plenty to enjoy.

Getting Started

Win 95

Simply place the CD in your disc drive and the interface will burst into life with the Autorun function.

Win 3.1

Insert the CD in your disc drive. In Program Manager, select the File menu and then Run. In the command-line box, type d:\pcgames.exe (where "d" is the letter of your disc drive).

Tech-Help FAQ

Q: When I try to run the interface, I get a "Can't find VB40016.DLL" message (or some other "Can't find" error).

A: *Run the setup program. Start Button -> Run -> type x:Setup (where "x" is your CD-ROM drive).*

Q: When I try to run the interface, I get a "Run-time error 367."

A: *If you get any kind of Run-time error, run the COMDLG16.REG file included on the root directory of your CD-ROM. Start Button -> Run -> type x:comdlg16.reg (where "x" is your CD-ROM drive).*

Q: During the setup routine, I keep getting "Can't Register file" errors.

A: *When you get this kind of error, you should get a dialog asking you whether you would like to Abort, Retry, or Ignore. Just select Ignore for any and all errors of this type. Don't worry: the interface will still run without a hitch.*

Q: This demo doesn't work.

A: *Read the notes accompanying each game in the description box—they will cover most possible problems. Please note that while we are happy to answer technical-support questions relating to the interface, the responsibility for the games lies with their respective publishers.*

Q: Should I re-install DirectX when prompted by a game's installation program?

A: *In general, no. Only try re-installing the latest version of DirectX if the game fails to run (particularly if you just get a blank screen after running a program).*

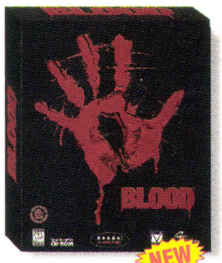
Q: Why haven't I got a CD-ROM with my magazine?

A: *Perhaps you bought, or have a subscription to, the non-CD version. To upgrade your subscription to include the CD, or to check if you should be receiving the CD, direct inquiries to pcgamessubs@pcgames.com.*

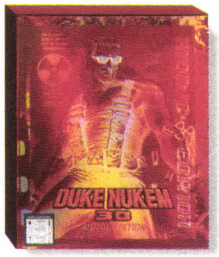
Q: I tried all of the above and I'm still having problems.

A: *Direct CD tech-related questions to ctou@pcgames.com.*





Blood
Arcade Style 5115100
DOS/WC 486/66, 16mb, J



Duke Nukem 3D: Atomic Edition
Arcade Style 5105804
DOS 486/66, 8mb



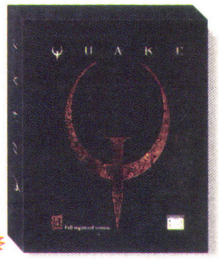
Command & Conquer: Red Alert
Strategy Game 5105101
DOS/WC Pentium, 8mb



First Aid 97 Deluxe
Utilities 5098306
WIN '95 486, 8mb



WarCraft Battle Chest
Strategy Game 5123807
DOS/WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb



Quake
Arcade Style 5097902
DOS/WC Pentium, 8mb

Give or Get 2 CD-ROMs for $4.95 ea.

PLUS 1 MORE AT GREAT SAVINGS!

(See details below.)

	Flying Corps DOS/WC Pent90, 16mb, J	Flight Sim.	5105606
NEW	**Links LS 1998 Edition** WIN '95 Pent90, 16mb	Sports	5121702
NEW	**Links LS** DOS/WC 486/66, 12mb	Sports	5121801
	The Roberta Williams Anthology DOS/WC 486, 8mb	Adventure	5107206
	Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '98 WIN3.1/WC Pent., 8mb	General Reference	5126800
	Command And Conquer DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb or MAC 68040, 16mb	Strategy Game	5050208
	Home And Garden 3D WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 12mb, P	Home/Personal	5115803
	Hoyle Casino WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 4mb	Strategy Game	5093109
	Jumpstart Kindergarten WIN3.1/WC 486, 1mb or MAC 68040, 4mb	Children's Ed.	5027701
	Jumpstart Pre-K WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5091400
	Masterclips 35,000 Premium Image Collection WIN3.1/WC 386, 4mb, P	Clip-Art Library	5084801
	Corel Gallery WIN3.1 386 or MAC LCII, 4mb, P	Clip-Art Library	5010301
NEW	**Reader Rabbit 1: Deluxe** WIN3.1/WC 386/25 or MAC 68030, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5110705
	Pod (MMX compatible) WIN '95 Pent120, 16mb	Arcade Style	5108709
	Interstate '76 WIN '95 Pentium, 16mb	Arcade Style	5108600
NEW	**How To Buy Mutual Funds** WIN3.1/WC 486, 8mb	Home/Personal	5119607
NEW	**Super Solvers Spellbound** WIN3.1/WC 386/25 or MAC 68030, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5111901
	Mechwarrior 2: Battle Pack WIN '95 Pentium, 16mb, J	Arcade Style	5108501
	Mechwarrior 2 Mercenaries DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5091905
NEW	**The Jenny Craig Cookbook** WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb or MAC 68040, 4mb	Home/Personal	5118708
	The 7th Guest DOS/WC 386 or MAC LCIII, 4mb	Interact. Game	5004700
	Earthsiege 2 WIN '95 486, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5080700
	Phantasmagoria DOS/WIN3.1/WC 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Interact. Game	5004502
	First Aid 3.1 WIN3.1 386, 4mb	Utilities	5098405
	The 11th Hour DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Interact. Game	5054309
	Nickelodeon: Director's Lab WIN3.1 486, 8mb	Children's Enter.	5081005
	Indycar Racing II DOS 486/66, 8mb or MAC PMAC, 16mb	Driving Sim.	5083308
	Z DOS 486/66, 8mb	Strategy Game	5089404
	Resume Maker Deluxe CD WIN3.1/WC 386/33, 8mb, P	Home/Personal	5050703
	Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure WIN '95 486/33, 8mb	Arcade Style	5076005
	Earthworm Jim WIN '95 486/33, 8mb	Arcade Style	5075304
	Floorplan Plus 3D WIN3.1/WC 386, 4mb	Home/Personal	5084702
	Command Aces Of The Deep WIN '95 486/33, 8mb	Strategy Game	5080809
	Front Page Sports Trophy Bass 2 WIN3.1/WC 486/66, 8mb	Sports	5093604
	Freddi Fish 2: The Haunted Schoolhouse WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Enter.	5093406
	Print Artist 4.0 WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68030, 8mb, P	Home/Personal	5089305
NEW	**Leisure Suit Larry Collection** DOS/WC 486, 4mb	Adventure	5116009
NEW	**Police Quest Collection** DOS/WC 486, 4mb	Adventure	5115902
	Beavis And Butt-Head In Screen Wreckers WIN '95 486/66, 8mb	Home/Personal	5117205
NEW	**Zork: Legacy Collection** DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Adventure	5114004
	Final Doom DOS/WC 486/33, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5083209
	Beavis And Butt-Head In Virtual Stupidity WIN '95 486/33, 8mb	Adventure	5075007
	Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5060405
	Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer 2 WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, J	Flight Sim.	5080908
	The Oregon Trail II WIN3.1/WC 486, 8mb or MAC 68030, 5mb	Children's Ed.	5078308
	The Time Warp Of Dr. Brain WIN3.1/WC 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5106307
	Star Trek Deep Space Nine: Harbinger DOS 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5072608
	WinDelete WIN3.1/WC 386, 8mb	Utilities	5084504
NEW	**Logic Quest** WIN3.1/WC Pentium, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5110200
NEW	**Select Phone** WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb	Home/Personal	5120100
	Phantasmagoria: A Puzzle Of Flesh WIN '95 Pentium, 12mb	Adventure	5102801
NEW	**Net Accelerator** WIN '95 486, 8mb	Utilities	5120605
	3D Ultra Pinball: Creep Night Arcade Style 5088208 WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb or MAC 68040, 12mb		
	NASCAR Racing 2 Driving Sim. 5104609 DOS/WC 486/66, 16mb		

How To Select CD-ROMs For Your System.

Each selection includes the following important information: minimum system required, minimum CPU required, minimum RAM required, and required peripherals in addition to a mouse and keyboard (J=joystick, P=printer).

For all titles, the *minimum* system requirements recommended (unless otherwise indicated) are: Hardware: SVGA monitor (256 colors), sound card, 40mb hard drive, double speed CD-ROM drive. Operating System: DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Macintosh System 7.0. (WC=WIN '95 compatible.) WIN '95 =designed for Windows '95 only. Pent.=Pentium.

A whole new way to get the most exciting CD-ROMs this holiday season – games, reference, edutainment and more – all at great prices! Great to give as gifts. Great to keep for yourself. Just write in the numbers of the 2 CD-ROMs you want for $4.95 each, plus shipping and handling. In exchange, you agree to buy 4 more CD-ROMs in the next 2 years, at our regular prices (currently as low as $29.95, plus shipping and handling) – and you may cancel membership at any time after doing so. What's more, you can get one more CD-ROM right now for the low price of $19.95 and have less to buy later (see complete details in coupon).

Free CD-ROM magazine sent approximately every 4-6 weeks (up to 13 times a year) reviewing our Featured Selection – plus scores of alternate choices, including many lower priced CD-ROMs. And you may also receive Special Selection mailings up to four times a year. (That's up to 17 buying opportunities a year!)

Buy only what you want! If you want the Featured Selection, do nothing – it will be sent automatically. If you'd prefer an alternative selection, or none at all, just mail the response card always provided by the date specified. You'll always have 14 days to decide; if not, you may return the selection at our expense.

Money-Saving Bonus Plan. If you continue your membership after fulfilling your obligation, you'll be eligible for our generous bonus plan. It enables you to enjoy great savings on the CD-ROMs you want – for as long as you decide to remain a member!

10-Day Risk-Free Trial. We'll send details of how Columbia House CD-ROM Direct works along with your introductory package. If you're not satisfied, return everything within 10 days at our expense for a full refund and no further obligation.

Act now, membership in CD-ROM Direct may be limited.

For faster service, use your credit card and call us toll-free 24 hours a day.

1-800-792-1000 Dept. SY7

Check us out online! For more titles...to order...or for more information.
http://www.columbiahouse.com/cdrom

Columbia House CD-ROM Direct

Dept. SY7, 3109 Canterbury Court, Bloomington, IN 47404-1498

Yes, please enroll me under the terms outlined in this advertisement. As a member, I need buy just 4 more CD-ROMs at your regular prices within the next 2 years.

Send my CD-ROM selections for: (check one only) ☐ PC (1) ☐ Macintosh (3)

Send me these 2 CD-ROMs for just $4.95 each plus $1.75 each shipping/handling (total $13.40). Write in the selection #'s below: # _____ # _____

Buy your first selection now and have less to buy later!

☐ Also send my first selection for $19.95 plus $1.75 shipping/handling which I'm adding to my $13.40 payment (total $35.10). I then need to buy only 3 more (instead of 4) in 2 years. #_____

Please check how paying: ☐ My check is enclosed. (BYX/BY1)

☐ Charge my introductory CD-ROMs and future CD-ROM Direct purchases to: (BYY/BY2)

☐ MasterCard ☐ Diners Club ☐ AMEX ☐ VISA ☐ Discover

Account Number _____ Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

My main CD-ROM interest is: (check one) (Note: You are always free to choose from any category.)

☐ Entertainment ☐ Education (includes children's titles) ☐ Edutainment ☐ Productivity

Name _____ Phone (_____) _____

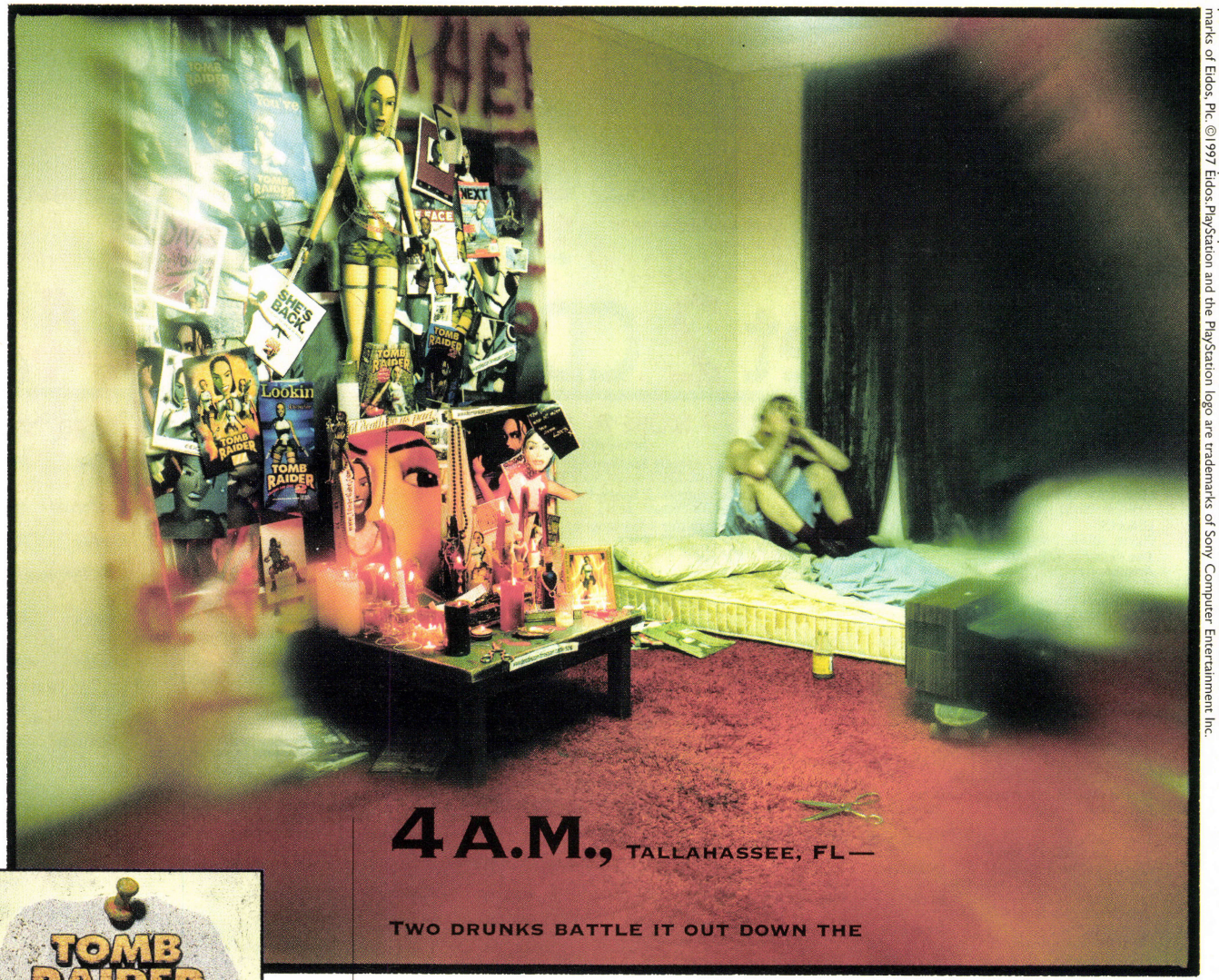
Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Important! Did you remember to choose PC or Mac? Will your selections run on your system?

Note: Columbia House reserves the right to request additional information, to limit membership or reject any application, or to cancel any membership. Offer limited to residents of the contiguous United States. Residents of Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, APO and FPO addresses please write for separate offer. Applicable sales tax added to all orders. F97-CDR-11G ©1997 The Columbia House Company

COLUMBIA HOUSE CD-ROM DIRECT



4 A.M., TALLAHASSEE, FL—

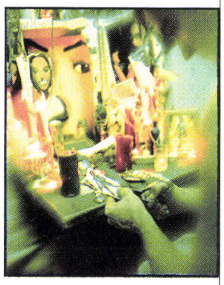
TWO DRUNKS BATTLE IT OUT DOWN THE HALL. THE 38 EXPRESS SQUEALS TO A HALT EVERY HALF HOUR ON THE STREET BELOW. SLEEP DOESN'T COME EASY IN ROOM 23. BUT FOR 19 YEAR-OLD RAY COOPER, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NOISE. AS HE SAYS, "IT'S BECAUSE EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES, ALL I SEE IS LARA CROFT."

TOMB RAIDER II
STARRING LARA CROFT

PC CD

PlayStation

CORE



inset photos

Top: The Second Coming, slated for this fall. **Bottom:** Preparing for her return.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

You've been warned.

EIDOS. TINY. LIVE. 1-800-771-3687. Cost of call $0.99/minute. Must be 18 years of age or have parents permission. Touch-tone phone required. Eidos Interactive, Core, Tomb Raider, Lara Croft and her likeness are trademarks of Eidos, Plc. ©1997 Eidos. PlayStation and the PlayStation logo are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

PC GAMES.EXE

27 GREAT DEMOS

Including:

- 7th Legion (MicroProse)
- Buccaneer (SSI)
- Conquest Earth screensaver (Eidos)
- Constructor (Acclaim)
- Dungeon Keeper (Origin)
- Formula 1 (3Dfx version) (Psygnosis)
- Galapagos (EA)
- Hexen II (Activision)
- L.E.D. Wars (Ionos)
- Legends '98 (Accolade)
- Lords of the Realm II: Siege Pack (Sierra)
- Montezuma's Return! movie (Utopia Tech)
- Pax Imperia: Eminent Domain (THQ)
- Pyrosaurus (Evryware)
- Scud: Industrial Evolution (SegaSoft)
- Shadows of the Empire (LucasArts)
- SODA Off-Road Racing (Papyrus)
- Steel Panthers III (SSI)
- Tennis Elbow (Goto Software)
- Uprising (Studio 3DO)
- Virtua Fighter 2 (Sega)
- War Wind II: Human Onslaught (SSI)
- WarHeads (Ionos)
- Warlords III: Reign of Heroes (Red Orb)
- Worldwide Soccer (Sega)

TEN

- Deadlock Shareware
- Quake Shareware
- Quake Enabler
- C&C: Red Alert Enabler

Mplayer

- Big Red Racing Enabler
- Command and Conquer Enabler
- C&C: Red Alert Enabler
- Quake Enabler

HEAT



Hexen II

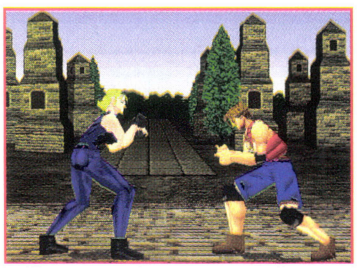
Check out this demo of the latest attempt to break the Quake stranglehold in the first-person-shooter market. Hexen II introduces four different character classes and spell enhancements that add a whole new level of variety to the gameplay. Detailed castle architecture and even a full-scale, working catapult make these interactive environments truly authentic—and seriously cool.



Legends '98

Please note: The Legends '98 demo must be run directly from the CD. Clicking on the Run button in the interface will result in an error. To play the demo, use Windows Explorer, or access the CD in My Computer, then locate the demo97.exe or demo68.exe in the Legend98 folder. Double-click on that .exe file to run and play the demo without any problems.

The full version of the game features four different time periods spanning the history of football. Check out the fully authentic rosters for the current season, plus those of nearly 30 years ago in a re-creation of some classic football moments.



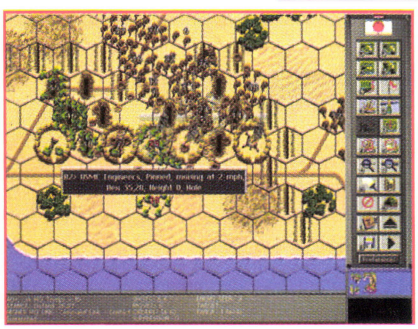
Virtua Fighter 2

Poised to become one of the best fighting games on the PC, Sega's conversion of its Saturn hit adds a slew of features from the various incarnations seen in different countries' console versions. This quick demo sets the scene with a limited bout that highlights the fighters' fluid animation, featuring all your favorite special moves. (We recommend a SideWinder gamepad or any other six-button pad for pulling 'em off.)



Dungeon Keeper

Haven't witnessed Bullfrog's successful attempt to give you the bad guy's perspective in a real-time strategic, resource-management situation? Here's the chance to try for yourself. This playable demo supplies the means to turn nasty on the world (in the nicest possible way) by digging out a dungeon to attract local lords and knights. This *PC Games* A-List winner is a certifiable classic.



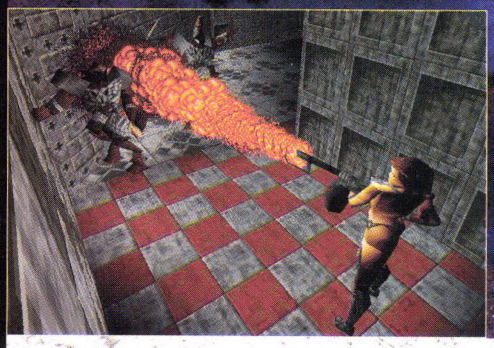
Steel Panthers III

To install the SP III demo, go to the Start button, select Run, and type x:\SP3Demo\install.exe, where "x" is your CD-ROM drive.

So you want more turn-based tank engagements? SSI's excellent strategy game gets a revamp in this third installment. With more modern vehicles and weapons systems, SP III will offer wargamers an even more detailed and involving battleground to put modern military forces through their paces.



There's only one thing more torturous than playing Deathtrap Dungeon.



-IAN LIVINGSTONE'S-

DEATHTRAP Dungeon

"Beat me. Whip me. Just don't hit that Quit button." Consider it your battle cry. Then bring on the skeletal warriors, zombies and countless other undead denizens. Each one is another chance to slice and dice like a Ginsu® knife gone bad. Or simply cast a spell



on the evil priestess who's done you wrong. Because in this cavernous maze of devious traps, it's all about cheating death at every turn, blurring that fine line between pleasure and pain. And just when you think you can't take it anymore, consider the alternative.

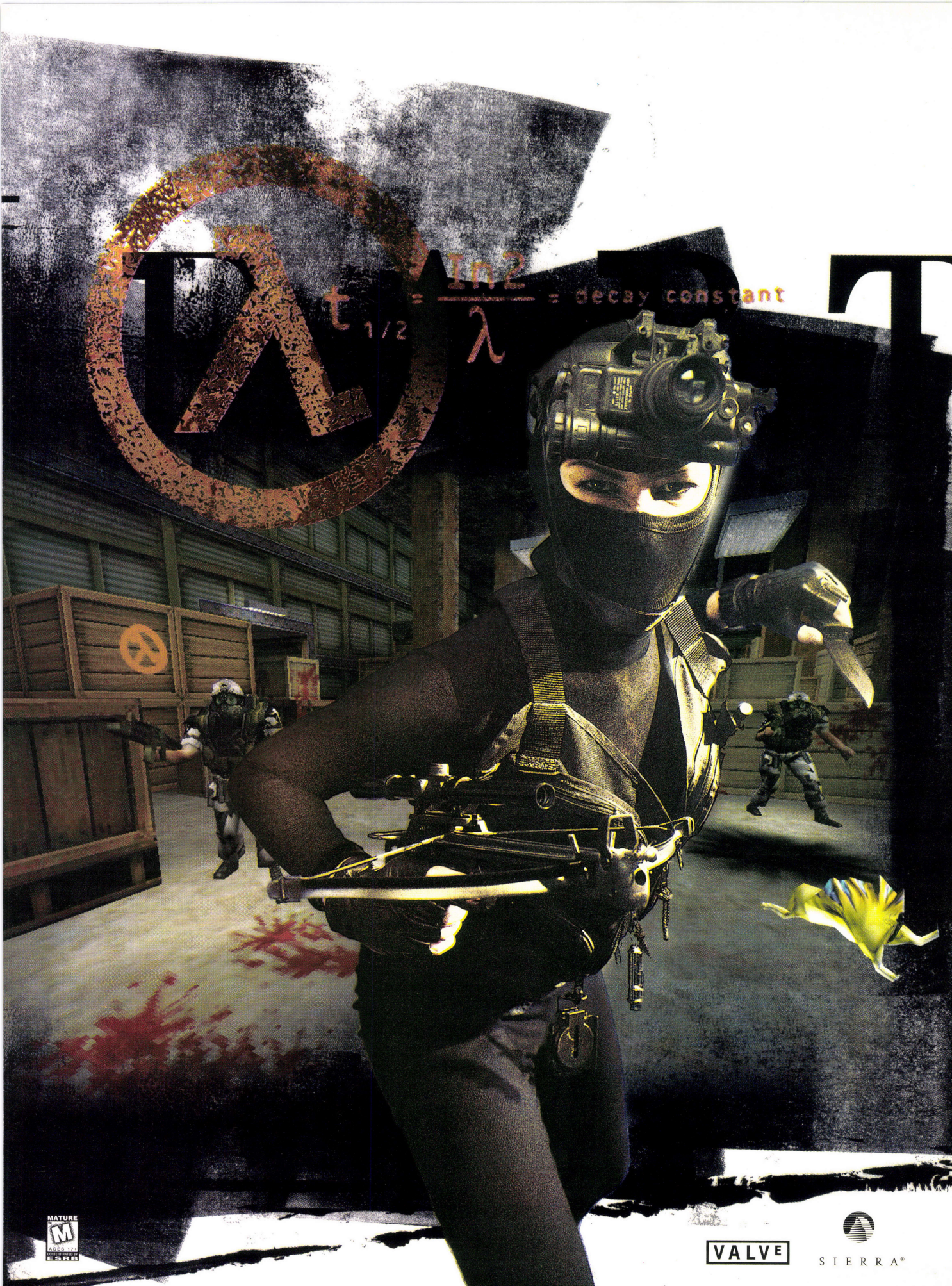
PC CD

PlayStation

EIDOS

INTERACTIVE

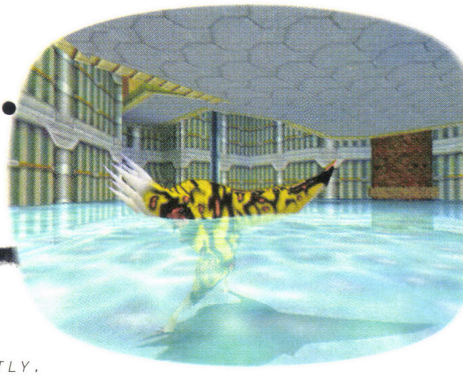
You've been warned.


$t_{1/2} = \frac{\ln 2}{\lambda}$ = decay constant
MATURE
M
AGES 17+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
VALVE
SIERRA®

STERNUM.



SHE'S SMART, HAS A GREAT PERSONALITY, AND KNOWS THAT THE WAY TO A MAN'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS STERNUM.



SHE'S A TRAINED GOVERNMENT ASSASSIN WHOSE ONLY GOAL IS TO SILENCE YOU— PERMANENTLY. AND YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF PLACES TO HIDE.

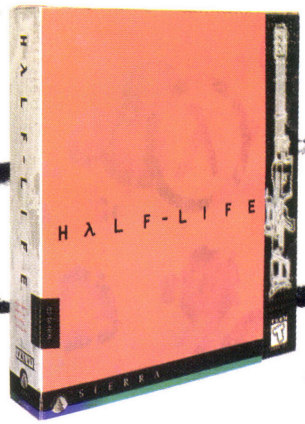
THINK THE ONLY OPPONENTS WORTH FIGHTING ARE THOSE YOU MEET IN A DEATHMATCH? THINK AGAIN. WITH HALF-LIFE'S ADVANCED CHARACTER AI, YOU'LL BATTLE ENEMIES SO SMART, YOU'LL SWEAR THEY'RE ALIVE. THEY'LL TAKE COVER, RECRUIT OTHERS AND WORK TOGETHER TO BRING YOU DOWN.

AND THE REALISM DOESN'T STOP THERE. THINGS ACT, LOOK AND SOUND LIKE THEY DO IN THE REAL WORLD. WE COULD FILL YOUR HEAD WITH TERMS LIKE 16-BIT COLOR, FULL-SPECTRUM LIGHTING, DSP SOUND, AND SKELETAL ANIMATION. WHAT IT ALL MEANS TO YOU IS A GAME SO REAL, SO UNPREDICTABLE, SO ALIVE, YOU'LL SWEAR IT HAS A PULSE. ADD A 3D CARD AND YOUR OWN PULSE WILL RACE. CREATE CUSTOM LEVELS WITH WORLDCRAFT 2.0 (INCLUDED). OF COURSE THERE ARE MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS— FOR UP TO 32 PLAYERS. BUT HOW MANY OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE AS BEAUTIFUL AS SHE IS, OR AS DEADLY?

PLAY THE DEMO @ **www.sierra.com/half-life**

HΛLF-LIFE





HAPPY PUPPY.COM™

#1 Game Site On The Internet

WHAT? YOU EXPECTED A SLICK AD THAT WAS DEVISED BY SOME HIGH DOLLAR ADVERTISING TEAM THAT SLAVED FOR HOURS TO DREAM UP?

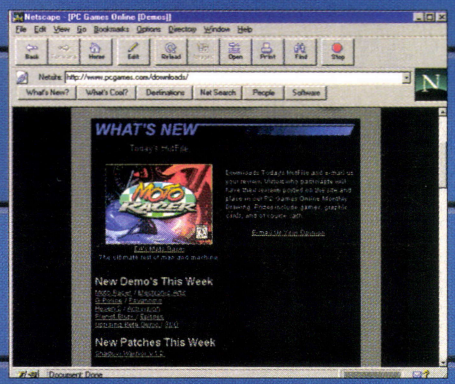
THAT'S CRIMINAL!



WE GOT GAMES TO BE PLAYING!

DOWNLOAD SECTION

Have you visited our new download section? Not only will we feature one hot download per day, but you can also search our database for all the demos we've offered for your downloading pleasure. Furthermore, we're giving everyone who downloads the daily pick the chance to get published on our site. You want to be a part of the action?



Here's how:

1. Download the featured game.
2. Play it.
3. Write a review of it.
4. Send it to mwallace@pcgames.com.

After sifting through all the submitted reviews, we'll post a handful of the most well-written, informative ones. But that's not all! Everyone who enters will be placed in a random monthly drawing in which one lucky winner will receive a prize of whatever we've got lying around the office...No, not trash! Our lair is filled with games, T-shirts, graphics cards, sound cards, and other gaming goodies. And, if we can't find a worthy enough prize somewhere around here, we'll give away cash! So what are you waiting for? Log onto PC Games.com and get typing!



PC Games Radio Show

For those of you who haven't already heard, PC Games.com and Pseudo.com (**www.pseudo.com**) have teamed up to provide all you gamers out there a weekly radio show that focuses on what we love...tuna-fish

continued on page 25

PCGAMES.COM

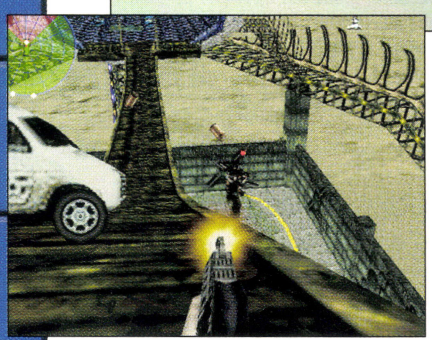
Reviews, Previews, News, Demos, Cheats, Chat—it's all at www.pcgames.com

First of all, I must say that I love my job! Things are always exciting around here. What other place lets you check out ALL the newest and greatest games (and some that aren't so great)? Where else can you sit down and talk with some of the most interesting people in the industry, all in the name of an interview? Where else can a gamer actually receive fan mail to boost his megalomaniac ego by simply writing about games? I'll tell you where—right here, baby!

And this month is no different. PC Games.com has been busy talking with people and writing stories. Now, here's a little taste of some of our latest developments and what you'll see on our site.

—Joe McCloud

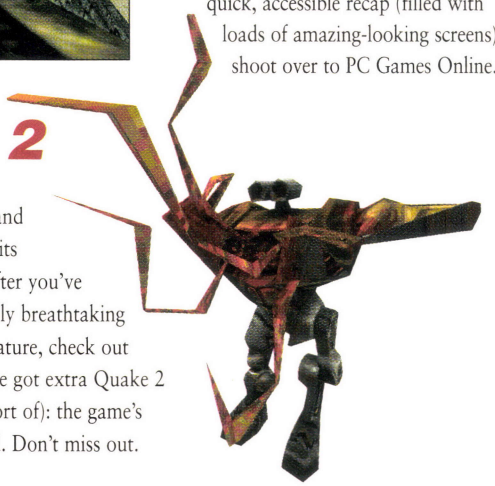




Redline

For months now, we've been giving you the ongoing story of the development of Redline, Accolade's upcoming action/driving game. If you've missed any of the chapters in this ongoing saga, or you just want a quick, accessible recap (filled with loads of amazing-looking screens), shoot over to PC Games Online.

Quake 2



YES! This is the game you've been waiting for, and we're just as psyched for its Christmastime release. After you've drooled over the absolutely breathtaking screens in this month's feature, check out **www.pcgames.com**. We've got extra Quake 2 art, plus a bonus (well, sort of): the game's storyline, straight from id. Don't miss out.

CyberDiversion Institute



WHERE THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE STANDS ON THE HEAT.NET 5-POINT PLAN.

On August 17, 1997, several members of the CyberDiversion Institute logged on to HEAT.NET. Here's what they found:

(RATINGS ARE FROM 1 TO 5 DOVES, 5 DOVES BEING EXCEPTIONAL)

POINT #1: Making Internet Gaming Easy.



After trying every internet game network, we found HEAT.NET had the easiest start-up: Log on to HEAT.NET, get the free HEAT software and play free, OR purchase the retail box (includes six months' premium membership, HEAT CD with games and internet access from MCI). HEAT.NET's simplified start-up process will jump-start world peace by allowing people to start diverting their aggressive urges away from reality immediately!

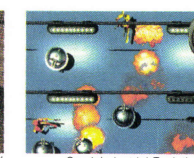
POINT #2: Creating The Fastest Internet Gaming Experience.

We found that HEAT.NET delivers the fastest, smoothest gameplay on the net. With the new millennium and the threat of Armageddon looming, the faster every human can purge their evil Reptilian Complex buildup, the better for all of us!

POINT #3: Making HEAT.NET Compatible With Nearly Every Multi-Player PC Game.

Nearly every aggression-intensive game out there can be played on HEAT.NET! We played some of our favorites, like Quake,™ WarCraft II™ and Scud: Industrial Evolution,™ as well as games designed exclusively for HEAT, like DeathDrome,™ Alien Race™ and Net Fighter,™ plus some intense HEAT-only Quake Mods. This wide range of Reptilian Complex outlets puts the power of peace into the hands of the masses!


Quake™


Scud: Industrial Evolution™

POINT #4: Rewarding Cyber-Aggression With Points And Prizes.



We found that HEAT is the ONLY internet game network where aggression is rewarded with frequent player points (they call Degrees) that can be redeemed for prizes. What an idea! If people play more often, they will quell aggressive urges more often and decrease real-life aggression more often. We believe HEAT.NET should win the Nobel Peace Prize for this point alone!

POINT #5: Creating Competition With Ladders And Events.

The ability to compete against the best players for prizes in automated, secure events and rise to the top creates an environment for Optimum Diversion Release (ODR), or the release of the most aggressive Reptilian urges, and the attainment of individual peace—which we believe will lead to a greater world peace!

Therefore, we, the CyberDiversion Institute, endorse HEAT.NET for its outstanding contribution in making the world safer for everyone. Please log on to HEAT.NET today and do your part for world peace!

D. G. Bartha

Officially endorsed by Dr. D.G. Bartha
The CyberDiversion Institute

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT US AT WWW.CYBERDIVERSION.ORG, OR WRITE TO THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE: 1453-A 14TH ST. SUITE 267 SANTA MONICA, CA 90404

continued from page 23

sandwiches! No, wait a second, wrong radio show... GAMES! That's right. And by the time you read this, we should already have begun.

The show will be broadcast every Thursday night and will feature various people in the industry. So far we've invited LucasArts and EA, among others, to participate. Users can log onto **www.pseudo.com** to check it out and see a list of upcoming guests.

HAPPY PUPPY GAMES

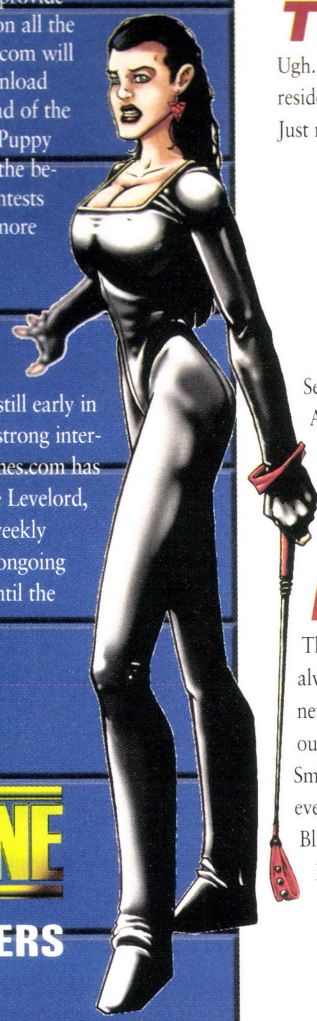
GamesDomain

Happy Puppy/ Games Domain

PC Games.com has recently joined up with Happy Puppy and Games Domain to provide even more information and coverage on all the new games being released. PC Games.com will now feature Happy Puppy's Top Download List, and the PC Games.com Download of the Day will be available on both Happy Puppy and Games Domain—and that's only the beginning. We'll have plenty of other contests and tie-ins; you'll find all of 'em and more at PC Games.com.

The S-Files

Ritual Entertainment's (**www.ritual.com**) upcoming 3D shooter Sin is still early in development, but it's already gaining strong interest in the gaming community. PC Games.com has landed an exclusive deal in which The Levelord, lead designer at Ritual, will provide weekly updates on the game's progress. This ongoing feature, The Sin Files, will continue until the game hits store shelves.

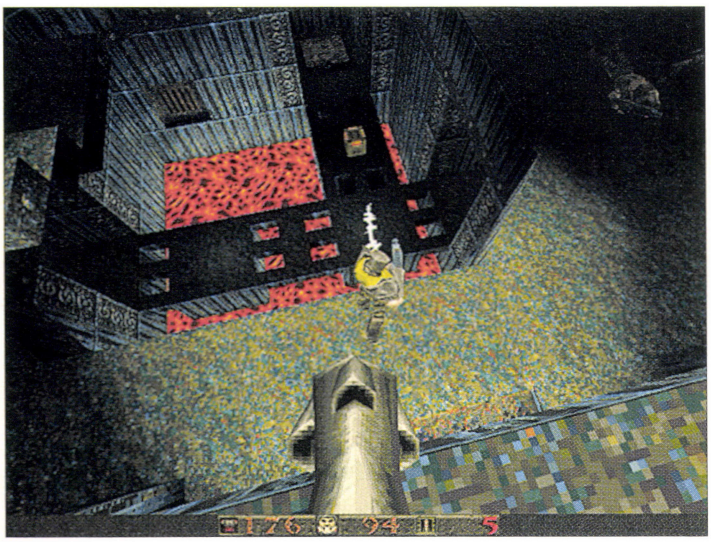


Check Out Two New Channels on

BATTLEZONE

TAKE NO PRISONERS and WARSPORT

PCGAMES.COM



The Sniper

Ugh. As much as we hate his tactics, we've given him a forum all his own. Check out our resident weasel as he preaches the gospel of playing to win. Wimpy or wise? You decide. Just make sure you watch your back—you never know where The Sniper's lurking.

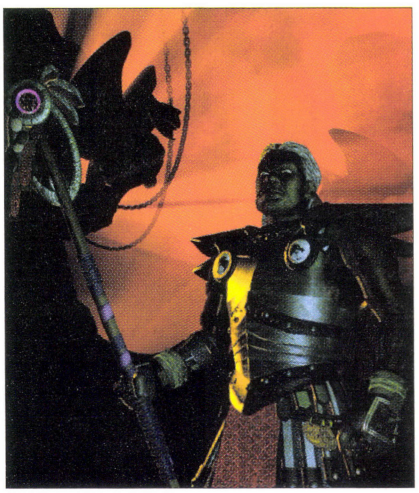


The Grumpy Gamer

Several columns later, he's just as crabby—and ready to share his opinions. Tune in for Assistant Editor Dan Morris' amusing, provocative slams on the gaming world's worst offenders.

ECTS

This yearly expo in London always has some hot gaming news—and we covered it! Check out Senior Reviews Editor Rob Smith's report on the news and events at the latest show, including Blizzard's announcement of Diablo 2.



HEAD LAND

DIGITAL MEDIA

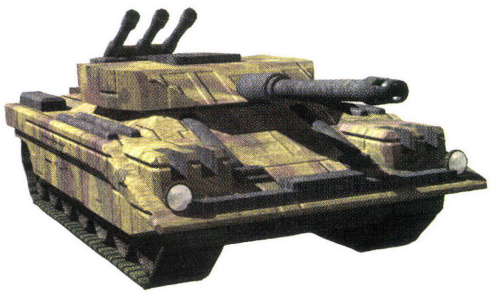


WHAT THE INTERNET

CHECK OUT THE INTERNET'S KILLER APP.

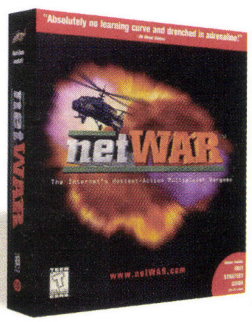
netWAR™ is state-of-the-art, arcade-style action. Now, rather than playing against a machine, you can arm yourself with kick-ass weapons and take on up to thirty real-life human opponents--all online.

One minute you're torching a tank driver from San Francisco, the next you're gunning down a jet-packed flame-thrower from Muskogee, next you're bombing an Apache tail-gunner from Fort Worth.





The action's faster and more fun than anything you've seen on the Internet. You can battle solo or even create your own squad for teamed assaults. Best of all, there are no hourly fees or clubs to join. Fun, action, and friendship--24 hours a day, every day, just like real battle.



Get in on the action; get a free demo or download the game at **www.netwar.com**. The full version of netWAR is also available at your local retailer.

WAR™

IS REALLY GOOD FOR!

THEN MAKE A KILLING ON THE WEB. OR DIE TRYING.



Download the free demo and you'll be enlisted automatically in The Spoils of netWAR Sweepstakes. This is your chance to win more than $100,000 in killer prizes.

The Spoils of netWAR Sweepstakes

Over **$100,000** in prizes!

If we told you the whole $100,000 list of prizes we'd have to kill you; so check out the site for more details, or call toll free 1-888-3netWAR, for more information.

The Internet's Hottest-Action Wargame

www.netwar.com

No purchase necessary. Must be 18 years of age or older to enter. Open to legal residents of the U.S. and Canada. Void in the Province of Quebec, the States of New York, Florida and Rhode Island, and wherever prohibited by law. For more information review the official rules at www.netwar.com or call toll free 1-888-3netwar. Copyright © 1997 Headland Digital Media, Inc. All rights reserved. netWAR and Headland Digital Media are trademarks of Headland Digital Media, Inc.

INCOMING!

Question of the Month: Gaming Taboos?



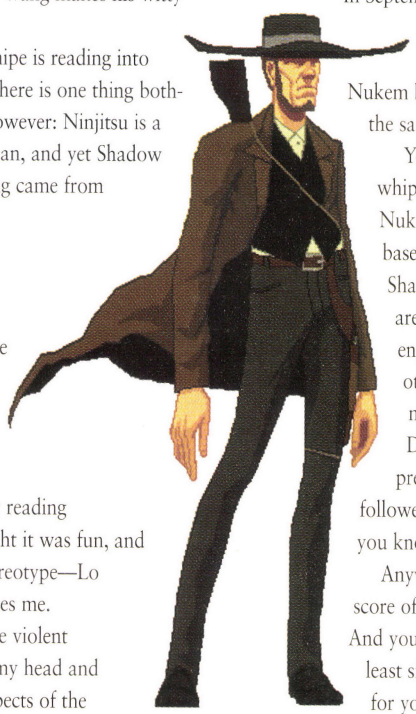
Over the last few months, we've looked at a lot of issues in games: Violence. Racism. And this month, Sex (see letter below). It all seems to be driving at a greater issue: What's off-limits in the world of computer games? Do the rules of other media—movies, TV, etc.—apply, or should games have rules all their own? Should they be regulated? What would you like to see more and/or less of in your games? As always, one letter-writer will win a stunning *PC Games* T-shirt and a free game. Send letters to Letters to the Editor, PC Games, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Ste. 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7482; or email: pcgamesletters@pcgames.com. Please include your full name with each letter.

Shadow Warriors Speak

I am writing in response to September's Face-off ("Who Gives a Wang?"). I tried the Shadow Warrior demo via download, and my first impression was that it was just a game. It's STILL just a game. I am Chinese, and Lo Wang is Chinese, and he happens to be a bungling fool. I am in no way offended by him, for common sense tells me simplemindedness can afflict all people of different races and genders. When Lo Wang makes his witty comments, I laugh.

I agree with Blade that Snipe is reading into this issue WAY too deeply. There is one thing bothering me about this game, however: Ninjitsu is a martial art originating in Japan, and yet Shadow Warrior implies that Lo Wang came from Japan's ninjas.

Steve Hsu
Via email



Lots of people are playing the new Shadow Warrior shareware, and so am I. Being Asian myself, I thought about how I felt while I played the game after reading September's Face-off. I thought it was fun, and like Blade said, there's no stereotype—Lo Wang's the hero, which pleases me.

But whenever one of those violent voiceovers pops up, I shake my head and smile in disgust. All other aspects of the game are fine, but the voiceovers upset me. If the dialogue was a little more realistic but still funny, I wouldn't have a problem with it.

It's like hearing a fighter scream a lame "Hi-ya!" as he karate chops another guy; what he should be doing is letting out a more realistic grunt. I have no problem with designers adding humor to martial arts; but here, it's too unoriginal. Americans make too many stupid imitations in movies and ads already—I hate to see them in games. When I'm playing Shadow Warrior, I feel like the character I'm playing is an American imitation of a ninja, not a real ninja. "A ninja knows no fear," true; but a true ninja wouldn't even speak during combat.

Thanh Ly
West Hartford, CT

Ya Dumb Cowpokes!

In September's Incoming!, the Editor writes, "We compared Outlaws to Duke Nukem because they're based on the same Build engine."

You oughta be pistol-whipped for that one. Duke Nukem was the first game based on the Build engine. Shadow Warrior and Blood are based on the Build engine, too. Outlaws, on the other hand, is based on a modified version of the Dark Forces engine, which predated the Build engine but followed the Doom engine. But you know that.

Anyway, I concur with the score of B that you gave Outlaws. And you've probably received at least six rounds in the butt for your snafu. If George Lucas is any man at all and feels the same about the Outlaws-to-Build comparison, I expect he'll cap you with six more rounds to boot.

P.S. Your magazine is otherwise quite a feast of game information. Keep up the good work.

Robert B. Stewart
Via email

Yipes! You're right, Robert: in our adrenaline-charged, first-person–playing fury, our thoughts got a bit scrambled, and we goofed. Outlaws does indeed use a modified version of the Dark Forces engine (and to good effect, if you ask us). Though we should point out, Duke wasn't the first Build engine game: TekWar and Witchaven both came first. Regardless, we're glad you agree with our rating of the game. Even as the Christmastime crop of dazzling new shooters comes our way, we think we'll still be impressed with Outlaws' sharp story and addictive, gun-slinging gameplay.

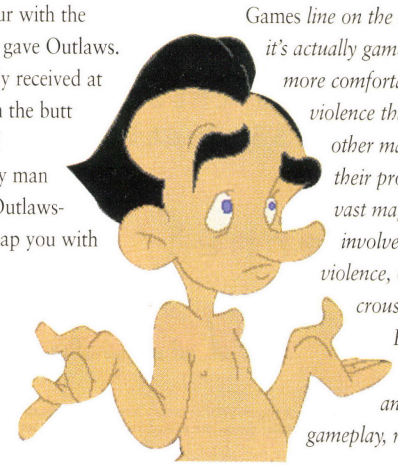
Do you forgive us, George? —*Ed.*

Discrimination?

You reviewed Blood, but you didn't review Strip Poker Pro 2. Are you more comfortable with sadistic violence than sex? What does this say about your standards? Where exactly do you draw the line?

Perhaps a little more discrimination is required.

Roger Hunting
Via email



Hmm. Interesting questions, Roger. We've received a few comments about this, so here's the PC Games *line on the subject: We'd say that it's actually gamemakers who are more comfortable with sadistic violence than sex, not us or the other magazines that cover their products. After all, the vast majority of games involve some measure of violence, often taken to ludicrous, impossible degrees. But how many games truly involve sex as an integral part of gameplay, rather than just a*


DEATH is NOTHING WITHOUT TORMENT.
MAGESLAYER
A malevolent 3D fantasy quest from the creators of HEXEN™ and HEXEN II™
Death would be too easy. Too little to repay a thousand year old debt. Too quick to satisfy the hunger of one you betrayed in another millennium. Before he extracts his terrible price on your soul, you are bound to wander through five worlds of atrocity. Stoking your powers. Gathering magic for one last, desperate struggle against Evil. Only then will he anoint you with the last sacraments of your torment.
No, Death would be too easy.
An all-powerful war chest of magical attacks like Chain Lightning and the Firewhip.
Play as one of 4 death-dealing Mageslayers across dozens of hellish levels.
Soul-destroying 3-D environments heaving with diabolical traps and mysteries.
Spread the Evil with several modes of MultiSlayer action for up to 16 players.
Windows® 95
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
RAVEN
MageSlayer © 1997 Raven Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Published and distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. GT is a trademark and the GT Logo® is a registered trademark of GT Interactive Software Corp. Windows® is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corp. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.
GT Interactive Software
www.gtgames.com

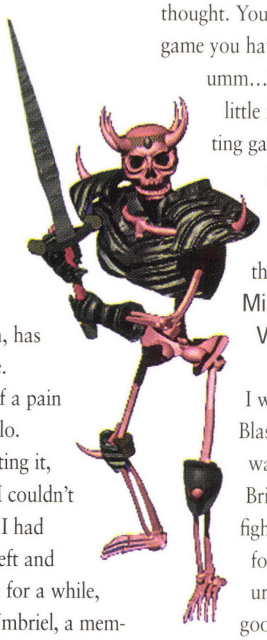
INCOMING!

background goal, cut-scene element, and so on? Other than the Leisure Suit Larry series—which we've reviewed—not many come to mind.

What you see a lot of instead are "games" like Atlantean Interactive's Alley Cats, in which sexual situations (or, more often, nudity), not gameplay elements, are predominant in the game. In other words, so-called gameplay (in this case, the actual bowling, which is ridiculously easy compared to, say, Ten Pin Alley's) is subverted by the rewards for gameplay, making the game a means to an end. In cases like these, your money's buying a few minutes of flesh, not gaming, and true gamers are inevitably going to be disappointed. Thus, we'd rather spend valuable editorial space giving you coverage of genuine games we think you'll be more interested in.

Now, that doesn't mean we won't cover real games with nudity or risqué elements: We've reviewed both Phantasmagoria titles, as well as Lords of Tantrazz, Atlantean's stylized adventure with Heavy Metal–ish art. But in the case of Strip Poker 2, we think most gamers would rather read about Hoyle Solitaire or Hoyle Blackjack. —Ed.

Battle.net Joys



I wanted to tell you guys about something cool that happened to me recently. I've been playing Diablo on Battle.net practically since Day One and have always posted on the Blizzard bulletin board for Diablo (**www.battle.net/forums/diablo-tavern/index.html**). As a result, my character, Kariyafan, has gained some popularity in the game.

Now, you all know how much of a pain lag can be while trying to play Diablo. Well, my creaky P75 just wasn't cutting it, and I told everyone via the BB that I couldn't afford to upgrade. Before I knew it, I had people offering me computer parts left and right. Some of the people I'd known for a while, and others I'd just met. My friend Umbriel, a member of Tarot—one of the oldest Battle.net clans—sent me a U.S. Robotics 33.6 modem to replace my 14.4 turtle modem. Boingo, a member of my Diablo clan, Snakegod, offered me an Asus Motherboard with a 512K cache on it. My friend CudaPrime, also a Tarot member, sent me a P166 CPU that he had lying around! McDeath, another member of Snakegod, sent me a 16x CD-ROM drive!

These people asked for nothing in return, and I can't even think of a way to possibly repay them for their kindness. Could you please publish this letter, and I'll send them each a copy of the issue when it comes out? I've never heard of anyone receiving such gifts before, and I'm very happy to know that I have such good friends, even if we've never even met in real life.

Ron Seery
Via email

That's quite a story, Ron. It's nice to see online gaming doing what it should: connecting people. —Ed.

The Ultima Saga Continues...

Mike, the fact that you'd judge a game ("Ultima Bad?" Incoming!, September 1997) being created by a superlative game company that hasn't been finished or priced yet shows a little of your thought. You judge graphics and plotlines from a game you haven't played. You quote prices that, umm...haven't been decided on yet? Sounds a little infantile. Join the rest of the fence-sitting gamers and wait for Ultima Online to at least arrive before bestowing upon us your annoying comments. And Editor: Your words were right on the money.

Michael Flynn
Via email



I will not let you Meridians speak Blasphemy against Britannia! I shall wage war on Meridian lands because Britannia will not go down without a fight! We shall not be looked at like fools! I urge all Britannians to unite! I urge all guilds to unite, whether they're good or evil! If you believe in defending Britannia from barbarians like the Meridians, then make it your quest to reduce Meridia to ashes! We will liberate Britannia of slander and insults from the Meridians! When we are done, Meridia shall be part of Britannia and we shall rule Meridia! Britannia's banner shall sail over the ruins of Meridia! Meridian's King shall be drawn and quartered. Its Queen shall be burned at the stake, and anyone else in high command of Meridia shall be locked in cages, and crows shall pick their bones clean. So I urge all Britannians to unite! Unite against Meridia! Unite against Slander and Blasphemy against Britannia! Unite for FREEDOM!!!!!

The Krivell Bros.
Via email

Umm...yeah. —Ed.

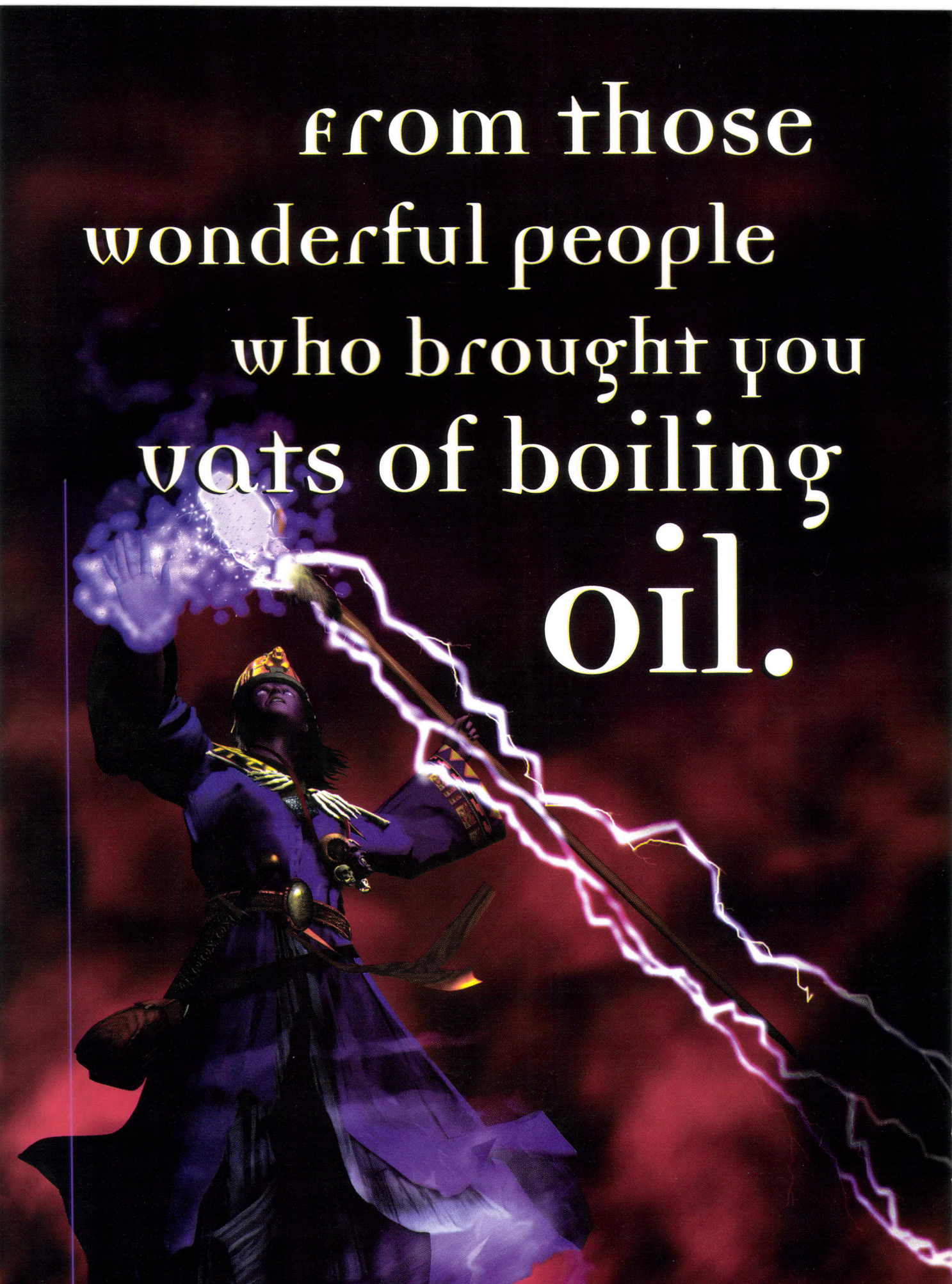
Whoops

We were so busy plotting each other's defeat, we accidentally left out the multiplayer grade from September's Warlords III review. Instead of N/A, the multiplayer options should have had a B rating.

Gamers Seeking Gamers

Matt Flook	primal@cyberhighway.net
Rafael Haro	a9011033@pucp.edu.pe
Adam Koebel	kabes@huron.net
Varun Mittal	PsYc0666@juno.com
Russell Presley	sterges@cyberhighway.net
Brian Rise	cryptie13@juno.com

Looking to meet fellow gamers? Send us your full name along with an email address, postal address, or fax number, and we'll do our best to fit you in on our list.


from those
wonderful people
who brought you
vats of boiling
oil.

LORDS OF MAGIC™



8 magical races

When the evil sorcerer Balkoth threatens the peaceful people of Urak with death and destruction, brave heroes with magical powers must rise up to stop the reign of terror and defeat the forces of tyranny. In Lords of Magic, the successor to the popular Lords of the Realm II, you enter a fantasy world where good and evil fight for primacy against a mystical backdrop of wizards, warriors, spells and storms, giants, gnomes, and Barbarians.

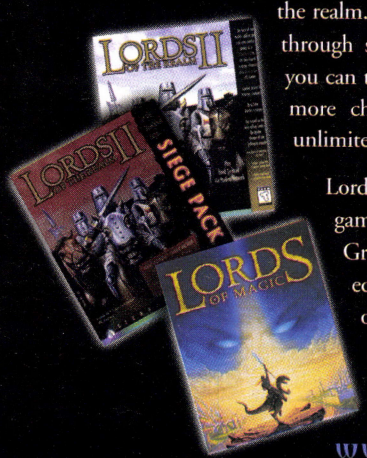


As you explore the land of Urak, you'll battle in dark and mysterious caves, castles and dungeons



3-D Terrain Editor

Building on the dramatic features that made Lords of the Realm II a breakthrough in strategy gaming, Lords of Magic combines turn-based exploration and resource management with real-time combat. Join forces with others (up to six players can compete on a LAN or over the Internet) or marshal your forces to take on Balkoth and his Barbarian allies alone. You'll command up to Eighty creatures, including elves, vampires, skeletons, and gargoyles, as you defeat evil and save the realm. Wielding the forces of magic through spells and artifacts of power, you can take multiple paths to victory: more choices, more outcomes, and unlimited replayability.



Lords of Magic features a true 3-D game map, with 16 bit SVGA Graphics and a powerful map editor that puts you in control of terrain height, topography, and texture.

comes a my



www.sierra.com

SIERRA®

Impressions

1997 Sierra On-Line, Inc. ® and/or TM designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc., Bellevue, WA 98007. U.S. Patent No.s 5,287,446, 5,425,139, 5,377,997. Other U.S. and foreign patents pending. All rights reserved. 007103000

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB


select one of eight cities to be the center of your empire
In your library wizards will research spells to overpower your enemies
ical world of swords and sorcery
Deep inside your wizard tower sorcerers practice their secret arts to conjure magical creatures and train new acolytes
when you confront the enemy forces of Balkoth, "zoom in" to real time combat

What Next for Raven?



One of the reasons Activision wanted Raven was to own the Hexen franchise.

Cutting an even larger swath into the first-person action genre, Activision has enticed Raven founders Brian and Steven Raffel to sell them the shop, best known for Heretic, Hexen, Necrodome, CyClones, and ShadowCaster. True, Raven and Activision already had a distribution agreement for the Quake-based Hexen II, but the new deal brings Raven under the publisher's roof as a wholly owned subsidiary. What does this all mean for Raven? How will the new ownership affect a developer recognized for making great action games? *PC Games* went to the source at both Raven and Activision to get the answers.

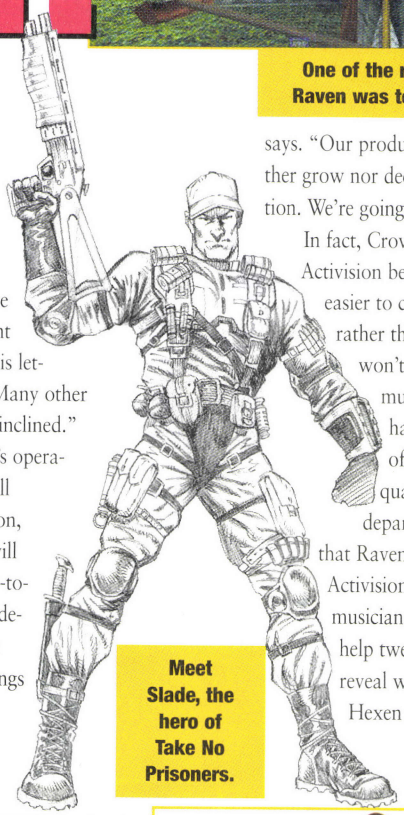
According to Mike Crowns, director of product development at Raven, the Raffels haven't overlooked the market-driven trend toward consolidation of game developers; despite their success, they've been open to Raven's acquisition by a large publisher.

"We've been looked at by numerous publishers," Crowns says, "but Activision offered us the best deal. The important thing is that Activision is letting Raven be Raven. Many other publishers were not so inclined."

Crowns says Raven's operations and employees will remain intact in Madison, Wisc., and Activision will not involve itself in day-to-day decisions on game design. "Brian and Steven will continue to run things as they have," Crowns says. "Our product-development strategy will neither grow nor decrease as a result of the acquisition. We're going to do the games we want to do."

In fact, Crowns praises the deal with Activision because he expects it will make it easier to concentrate on game-making, rather than game-selling. Now Raven won't have to shop titles around to multiple publishers—and they won't have to adapt to the differing needs of three or four sets of marketing, quality assurance, and distribution departments. Crowns also points out that Raven designers will have access to Activision's staff programmers, animators, musicians, and sound-effects technicians to help tweak its titles. But Crowns will not reveal what Raven's next project—after Hexen II—will be.

continued on page 39



Meet Slade, the hero of Take No Prisoners.

COVERT OPS

Ion Storm Assumes Dominion

Not only did game designer Todd Porter help start Ion Storm, but he's also managed to bring along Dominion, his game project from his former life at 7th Level. In a truly last-minute deal, Ion will now release the real-time strategy game based on the environments and military units developed for G-NOME. Porter is purported to have felt guilty about leaving the game behind. No financial or other details about the agreement are available from either company, but an Ion Storm representative says Dominion will be in stores before Christmas.



7th Level has ditched Dominion.

Logitech Preps Force Feedback Stick

The folks at Logitech have a force-feedback stick in the works. All *PC Games* spies have seen so far is the same grip used with the Wingman Extreme Digital and the Wingman Warrior, only sticking out of an ugly black box. Although Logitech is keeping information on the stick under wraps, its footprint is similar to the Warrior's, and we wouldn't be surprised if the company ended up calling the unit the Wingman Force. Apparently the joystick uses a mechanism other than gears to move the grip along its axis, and it uses Immersion's second-generation drivers. Details about the new mechanism, a release date, and price range haven't been revealed.



Logitech may soon add a force-feedback stick to its Wingman line.

Starcraft Blasts Turkeys

Blizzard's been awful quiet lately—at least it seems that way to the tens of thousands of you waiting for its next real-time strategy game, Starcraft. The good news is that the long thaw may be just about over. Blizzard was planning a limited beta-test of Starcraft on Battle.net in September, with plans to release the full game before Turkey Day.

At the Wire

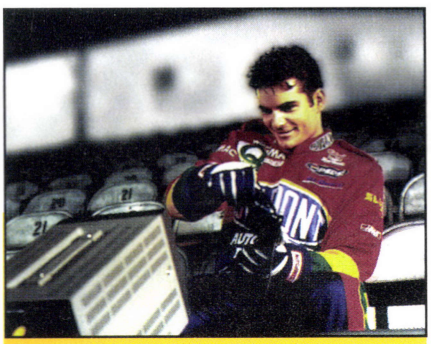
Forsaken No More

Ah, those pesky trademark gremlins have been working their ways over at Eidos. Those of you itching to play the dark fantasy Forsaken: The Thrall of Chaos, due early next year, now have to watch out for the game's new name, Revenant. Eidos wouldn't say exactly what trademark it was in danger of infringing.

This upcoming RPG is a Direct3D-based game featuring 3D characters and 16-bit graphics. Players will find 20 characters to choose from, 16 monsters to fight, and five weapon types to slay the assorted dragons and wraiths. Revenant also allows players to develop their own spells.

Forget Forsaken. Look for Revenant.





Why is this guy happy? He just signed a big contract with ASC.

Racer Runs Over ASC

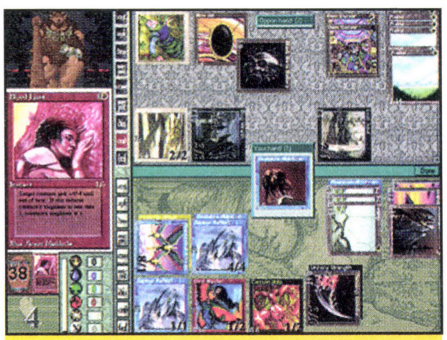
Daytona 500 winner Jeff Gordon has signed a deal with ASC Games to coproduce a racing-game series. PC and console versions of the first game in the series won't appear until late 1998 at the earliest. Gordon, who has already won eight victories in 1997, will take an active part in the game design.

NEC Gets Orbed

Buy an NEC Ready Pentium system with MMX, and you're going to find Spacetec's SpaceOrb 360 controller bundled in the package. NEC has been trying for more than a year to ingratiate itself with computer gamers, and the SpaceOrb offer is the company's latest overture. The SpaceOrb is a one-piece joystick alternative that enables pitch, yaw, strafing, and jumping via a billiard ball–style controller that you twist.

Magic Goes Multiplayer, Finally

Okay, Magic: The Gathering fans—the multiplayer patch is currently in beta. If all goes well, the final version should be approved for general release in November, according to MicroProse. Called ManaLink, the patch can be downloaded at **www.gathering.net**. The site also features online-game match-ups, updates, deck files, and chat.



It won't be long now for multiplayer Magic: The Gathering.

continued on page 42



Starcraft may wreck your football-watching plans this Thanksgiving.

Now, the bad news: Blizzard's obviously been focusing its efforts on Starcraft at the expense of Warcraft Adventures, its first adventure game based on the Warcraft universe. Originally planned for Christmas, this title has been pushed back to the middle of next year. Also, Blizzard announced it will not be developing an add-on pack for Diablo, as had been rumored. Before you get too bummed, the company did say it has authorized another developer—as yet unnamed—to release a Diablo expansion pack. Rest assured, we'll stay on top of that one for you. In the meantime, let's hope the wait for Starcraft is worth it.

Beastly 3D

Hasbro doesn't want to be known for Battleship and Monopoly alone; the game division of the toy giant has designs on the 3D action category with two new projects.

BeastWars is the latest take on the *Transformers* franchise and is an offshoot of the television cartoon series currently on air.

Headz is a totally goofy original concept from Scotland-based VIS Interactive. Players get to romp through seven levels and 35 missions with a selection of five character heads they can switch between. Each character has a different talent and weapons mix for solo and multiplayer arena battles. With more than 225 heads to start with, and special-edition packages in the works, players win by collecting as many heads in battle as possible. An online-only version is also in development. Both games will offer 3Dfx Voodoo support, as well as Direct3D support for other video accelerators. Expect them by early next year.



3D-accelerated inflated heads from Hasbro.

continued on page 39



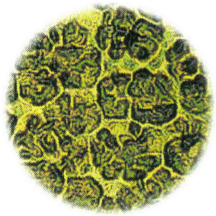
DARK COLONY™

There *is* life on Mars. And in the twilight of the 21st century, it raises its ugly head. Dark Colony transports you to that not-so-distant future where warring corporations have plundered Mars and unearthed a horrific secret. Now, all must suffer the consequences.

This is real-time tactical combat – smart, visual, and violent. The animation? Flawless. Feel the heat and toxic gases singe your eyes with each fiery explosion and massive eruption.

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Windows® 95 and Macintosh CD-ROM



LAST SEPTEMBER, NASA SHOWED YOU MICROBES FROM MARS.

The aliens? Revolting. Leave your pre-conceived notions about ET at the space dock – these are anything but humanoid and everything you fear.

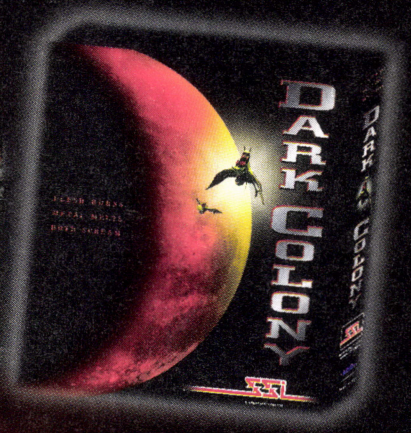
Dark Colony. A superior real-time strategy experience – now, and well into the future. That is, if we still have one. *Call 800-234-3088 to order or visit your local retailer.*
www.darkcolony.com

GAMETEK

SSI
A MINDSCAPE® COMPANY

Dark Colony is a trademark of Gametek, Inc.
©1997 Strategic Simulations, Inc., a Mindscape Company. All rights reserved.







TODAY, WE'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU HOW NICELY THEY'VE GROWN UP.

Power Grabs

GAME BYTES

New NASCAR

Speed drivers take note: NASCAR's behind a new game called Silicon Motor Speedway. This interactive simulator boasts the participation of NASCAR Winston Cup champions Dale Earnhardt and Rusty Wallace and attempts to present as realistic a NASCAR experience as possible.

EA Putters

You love golf? EA Sports wants to pay you to play PGA Tour Pro—but only if you win. EA is hosting its first professional online golf tourney from September 28 to November 1. More than $60,000 in prize money will be doled out in five Internet-based tournaments. Players will get a chance to play on courses like Pebble Beach Golf Links or the TPC of Scottsdale. You want to know how? Check out **www.easportstour.com**.



Playing EA's PGA Tour Pro could win you dollars.

Red Storm Lands at Mindscape



Tom Clancy's Red Storm games will be released by Mindscape.

Author Tom Clancy's latest foray into computer gaming has found a dock at Mindscape and Headland Digital Media. Mindscape now gets to distribute Tom Clancy's Politika, the first title from the writer's Red Storm production house. The game will be published by this Christmas and packaged with an original Clancy novel of the same name. Red Storm will release its second title—a combat rodeo game called Planet Texas—early next year. The developer, which has already partnered with Pearson to create online multiplayer games, will work with Headland to cross-promote and distribute the online titles.



A Rendition-ready patch for WipeOut XL is now available.

Rendition Sucks Up $22 Million

To help keep its place as one of the 3D darlings in the accelerator wars, Rendition has picked up $22 million from a number of venture-capital firms. The money will be used to fund the company's debut of its next-generation 2200 3D chipset. Also on Rendition's product menu this year is a less expensive and slightly less capable 2100 model, targeted at motherboard makers who want to add 3D acceleration to their logic boards. At press time, no video-card makers had officially announced that they are using the 2200 chipset.



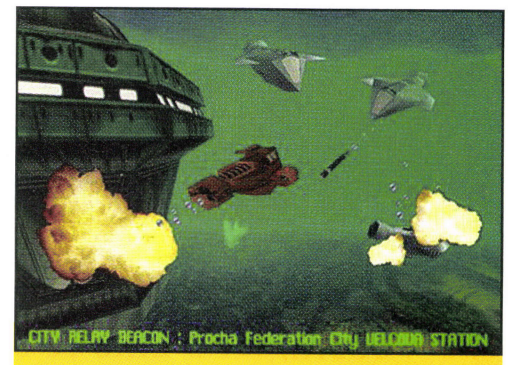
Williams is spinning off its Midway Games division.

Ubi Soft Reels In Criterion

The lads at UK-based Criterion have signed a three-year distribution deal with Ubi Soft covering all markets except Japan. Sub Culture, due to ship in early November, will be the first game released under the agreement. The real-time 3D action game forces players to stop a war with a one-man sub. Criterion has two other releases on the drawing board but hasn't announced details yet.

Williams Casts Midway Adrift

The division that creates such coin-operated videogame franchises as Mortal Kombat and Area 51, as well as home versions of the same titles for PCs and consoles, may soon be its own independent company. Williams plans to spin off Midway sometime between now and early next year, if the federal government approves. It's not known what the spinoff will mean for Midway's relationship with GT Interactive, which publishes the PC versions of games like War Gods and Area 51. Midway also has a distribution relationship for PC titles with Crystal Dynamics.



Ubi Soft now publishes Criterion games like Sub Culture.

Raven cont. from page 34



Hexen II adds intriguing new character classes.

recognize the strong relationship Raven already has with id. That's why Raven is so important to us," Lasky says.

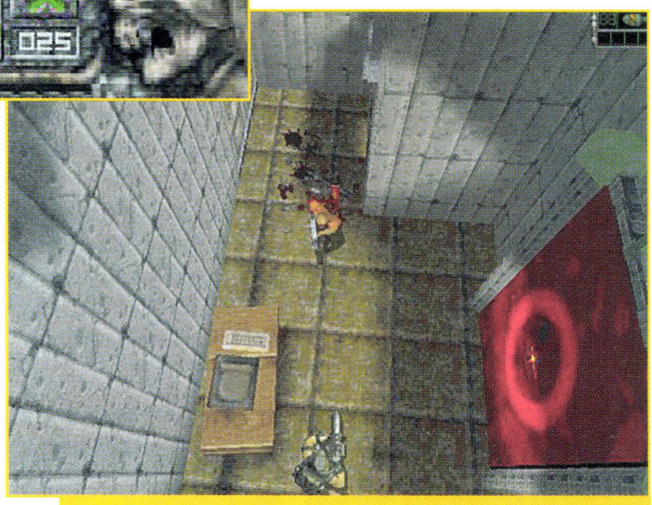
Lasky confirms that Activision wants Raven to continue on its own path without corporate interference, with all titles after Take No Prisoners (Red Orb) and Mageslayer (GT Interactive) retaining the Raven label alongside Activision's. And, he says, don't be surprised if some future Activision-developed games make use of Raven's Spectre and Vampire game engines. *—George T. Chronis*

For its part, Activision sees Raven as an important jewel that will add to the publisher's luster as a game company. Mitch Lasky, senior vice president of studios, says Activision has had its eye on Raven for a long time.

"We've been very intent on bringing the Hexen franchise into the fold," Lasky says. "We see ourselves growing into a $100 million company that can challenge EA for dominance of the industry by the end of this fiscal year. Having Raven as an Activision company is going to help us get there."

Despite such lofty goals, Lasky says not to expect Activision to go on a developer-buying spree. While the publisher is definitely reacting to market forces that are driving action games and first-person shooters, unmanaged rapid expansion usually ends up getting game companies into bigger financial trouble, he says.

"We want steady growth, first-person shooters are solid high-performers in sales, we're proud of the relationship we're building with id, and we



Take No Prisoners, distributed by Red Orb, will be one of the last titles Raven does for a publisher other than Activision.

COVERT OPS cont.



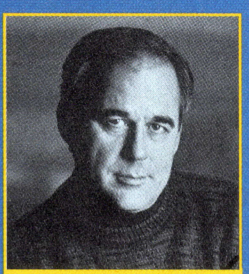
The pride of Battle.net is ready to decimate consoles.

Diablo Infests PSX

Remember how much fun you had teasing your console buddies by showing them how much better Tomb Raider looks on a PC? You're about to get another chance. EA plans to port Blizzard's Diablo to the PlayStation. While we believe in charity for the less fortunate, don't forget to point out that on a PC you can play Diablo over Battle.net.

The Horror

Mindscape has inked a deal with horror novelist John Saul to bring his serial *The Blackstone Chronicles* into the gaming realm. The projected summer 1998 release will come shortly after a six-hour ABC miniseries version of the books, which deal with the spooky doings surrounding the town of Blackstone, Maine. The game will examine the Asylum, the town's commanding, mysterious mansion. Unexplored in the books, the Asylum turns out to hold the gateway to worlds both in its rooms and in the minds of its inhabitants.



Horror author John Saul has signed with Mindscape.

—George T. Chronis, Steve Klett and Don St. John

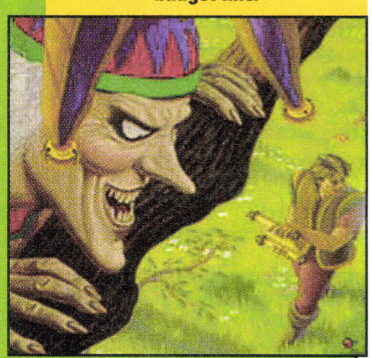
CommLink

GAME BYTES

Cheap Classics

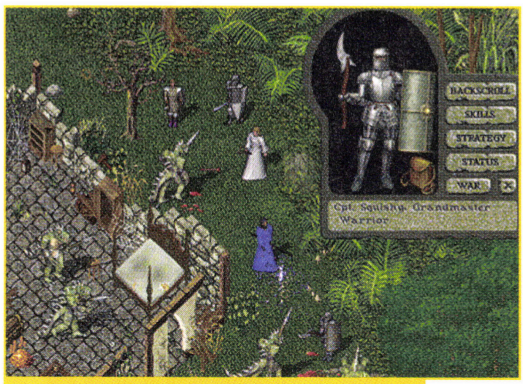
If you still haven't bought the likes of Command & Conquer, the Kyrandia Trilogy, Lands of Lore, or NHL Powerplay '96, wait until the middle of November and you'll pay less for them. That's when Virgin plans to rerelease these under its White Label—the same second-run brand that's seen a lot of success in Europe. In North America, Virgin rereleased The 7th Guest and Screamer at budget prices last September.

Legends of Kyrandia will soon become part of Virgin's budget line.



TEN Wolfram

Wolfram: Metal of the Ancients is the latest online-only game exclusive to make it to TEN. Developed by Bolt Action Software, Wolfram boasts a unique blend of traditional game genres by attempting to include strategy, action, and simulation in one game. The type of gameplay used in a match will be decided by the players, who get to drive a futuristic hovercraft into battle.



Ultima Online nears the 3,000 mark.

Ultima Population Explosion

Despite numerous attempts at population control, including the untimely death of Lord British, the Ultima Online beta test broke all previous records when it amassed more than 2,800 online gamers at once. So far, more than 25,000 people have participated in the beta, which began in June. But over-crowding shouldn't be a problem: Origin estimates that it'd take more than eight hours for an Ultima character to walk from one side of the world to the other, which works out to be more than 190 million square feet.

You can play Kingdom of Drakkar on MPG-Net.

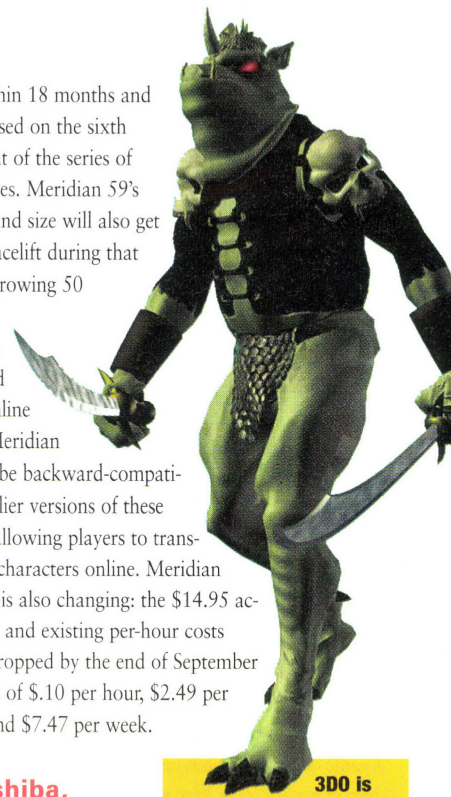


MPG-Net Bags EarthLink and AT&T

New partnerships abound for MPG-Net, which just signed agreements with both EarthLink and AT&T WorldNet. Access to MPG-Net games will now be available via EarthLink's Arena page and AT&T's Play page. Upcoming MPG-Net games include the fantasy adventure DragonGard, the real-time combat Search and Destroy, and a medieval strategy game called FiefQuest.

3DO Covets Online Fantasy

Looking for a larger slice of the fantasy-online market, 3DO is turning its Heroes of Might and Magic franchise into Might and Magic Online. The online world is set to debut within 18 months and will be based on the sixth installment of the series of retail games. Meridian 59's graphics and size will also get a major facelift during that period—growing 50 percent. 3DO says Might and Magic Online and the Meridian update will be backward-compatible with earlier versions of these franchises, allowing players to transfer existing characters online. Meridian 59's pricing is also changing: the $14.95 activation fees and existing per-hour costs should be dropped by the end of September for new fees of $.10 per hour, $2.49 per 24 hours, and $7.47 per week.



3DO is working on a better-looking version of Meridian 59 for its online service.

Buy Toshiba, Get Concentric

Toshiba is so sure buyers of its Infinia PCs want to go online that it's added an Internet button to its Win 95 desktop. Clicking that button will take you directly to Concentric's game-tweaked network. New Toshiba owners who register will get five hours of free Internet time each month for a period of six months. After that, they can upgrade to Concentric's $19.95-per-month plan. The four Toshiba systems involved are the 7202, 7230, 7231, and 7260.

continued on next page

Receive free Internet time from Toshiba and Concentric to play games such as Pax Imperia.





"The finest pinball simulation anywhere." "This is as near to pinball perfection as we have seen on a PC"
PC GAMES

PC GAMES A LIST
PC CD-ROM

Nominated a TOP 50 game for 1998. "TIMESHOCK! puts many other games, and not just pinball titles - to shame"
PC GAMER

empire® INTERACTIVE

Empire Interactive - call 1 800 216 9706, Website: www.empire-us.com

timeshock!

At the Wire cont. from page 35

GAME BYTES

Micron Speedster

Does a 300MHz Pentium CPU and an Accelerated Graphics Port sound pretty good? That's just what Micron Electronics is offering with its Millennia XKU. The video acceleration is top-notch too, thanks to Diamond's Viper 128-bit N-VIDIA AGP video card with 4MB SGRAM.

ClassicGames.com

Is there room for another free online-multiplayer-gaming service? If you answered yes, InfoMedia plans to give you what you want if you like classic games such as chess, checkers, hearts, Go, and more. You can check it out at **www.classicgames.com**.

Play it Safe

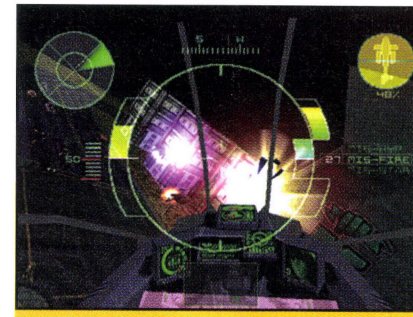
Maybe you'd like to brush up on your technique a little before hitting Vegas or Atlantic City. Or maybe you just want to play it safe without risking your paycheck. Either way, you'll want to check out Interplay's Beat the House 2. It features new games such as Poker Challenge, mini-baccarat, and an all-new "Football" slot machine. Beat the House 2 will be available in October.

Heat Splatters MCI

SegaSoft is including HEAT.net game CDs with the InternetMCI service start-up kit, which began shipping in late September. Players who sign up with InternetMCI will get a free month of service; after that they'll be charged $18.95 a month for unlimited access to MCI's high-speed Internet connections. *—Amy Crigger*

PowerVR Assimilates Matrox

If you're looking for cheap, good D3D support and support for a growing list of more than 100 PowerVR-enhanced games, then the $99 m3D from Matrox may be your accelerator. The 4MB card uses the latest PCX2 chipset designed by NEC and VideoLogic. The card will ship by Christmas and will include a yet-to-be-determined game bundle.



Matrox will release a PowerVR accelerator supported by Psygnosis games such as G-Police.

SegaSoft Offers Sure Thing

Continuing its in-your-face marketing style, SegaSoft wants you to believe that its $19.95 Lose Your Marbles is better than Tetris. To back up that claim, SegaSoft is offering a money-back guarantee on the game. Don't like it? Just send it back to SegaSoft for a full refund. Details are at **www.segasoft.com**.

—George T. Chronis

STB Secures Bundle

If you purchase STB's new Velocity 128 D3D accelerator board, you'll also get full versions of EA's FIFA Soccer '97 and Activision's Interstate '76. This video card may be one of the most capable in its class, thanks to 4MB of superfast SGRAM. STB's already claiming that the Velocity, which is based on NVIDIA's Riva chipset, is 17 percent faster in 3D benchmarks than 3Dfx's Voodoo chipset. The Velocity should hit the street for less than $200.



You'll find FIFA Soccer '97 bundled with STB's Velocity 128 accelerator.

CommLink cont. from previous page

New Page for Knight Clanners

Can't wait until the summer of 1998 for Gabriel Knight III: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned? Sierra has set up a Web site just for you at **www.sierra.com/titles/gk3**. The new game will be a real-time 3D adventure, and fans of the series can use the site to keep track of early stages of development, and to download concept art, 3D screenshots, and AVI trailers.

Keep track of the new Gabriel Knight game from concept to completion.



netWAR is out of beta and ready for battle.



netWAR Goes Retail

By the time you read this, Headland's real-time combat online game netWAR will be out of beta. Headland has also firmed up retail pricing. If you buy it in stores, the game will cost you $39.95, with one year's worth of online time included. Download the online version from **www.netwar.com** and the price drops to $29.95. The first 5,000 people to download the retail package will be charged $19.98 for a charter one-year subscription.

—George T. Chronis

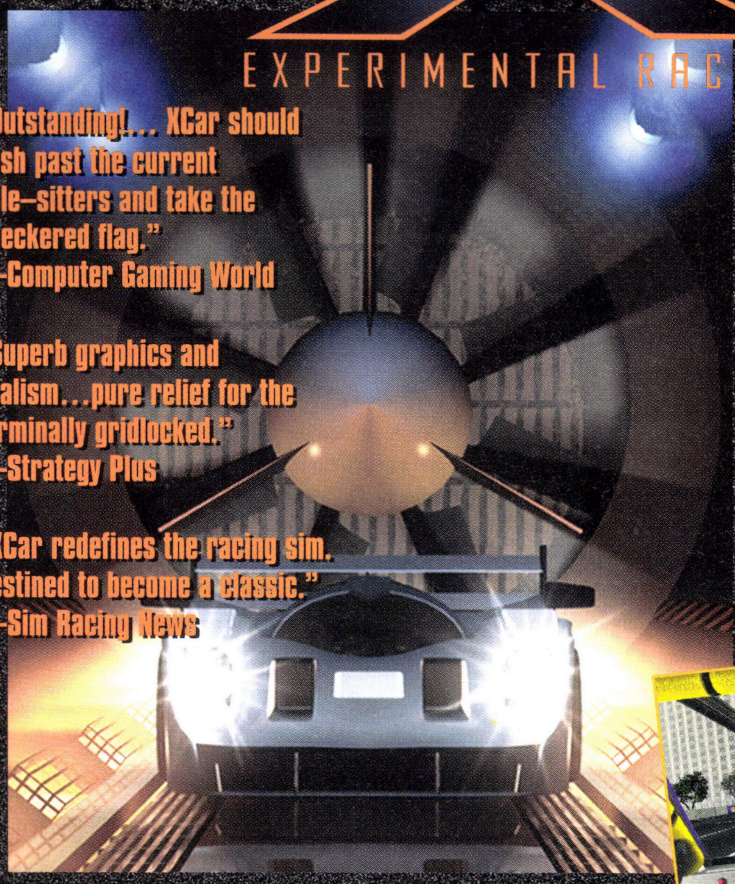
BETHESDA SOFTWORKS™

presents

XCAR®

EXPERIMENTAL RACING

Test drive XCar at www.xcar.com

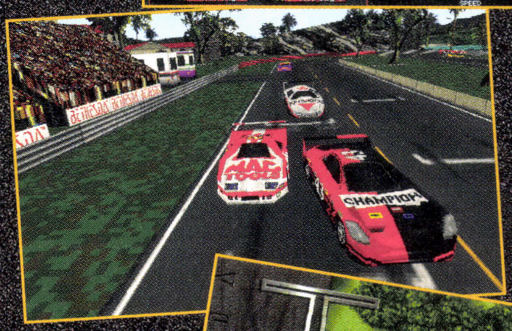


"Outstanding!... XCar should rush past the current pole-sitters and take the checkered flag."
—Computer Gaming World

"Superb graphics and realism...pure relief for the terminally gridlocked."
—Strategy Plus

"XCar redefines the racing sim. Destined to become a classic."
—Sim Racing News







Actual IBM screens shown



Greatness is earned. Not awarded.

- Race any of 17 prototype XCars. The latest experimental racing vehicles!
- Customize every aspect of your car's performance using the latest cutting-edge racing technology, then test drive your prototype.
- Experience brilliant high res (SVGA) graphics at sustained frame rates. XCar is the most beautiful and fastest racing game on the market!
- Includes a library of real racing circuits and conceptual tracks. You can race Lime Rock, the streets of Seattle or around Mayan Temples!
- Generate real telemetry data on the high speed oval, skid pad or handling tracks to customize your car for optimum performance.
- The first true hard core racing simulation for experienced racers. Arcade Mode for those who want to learn to race like the Pros.
- Includes network and modem support for multi-player racing!

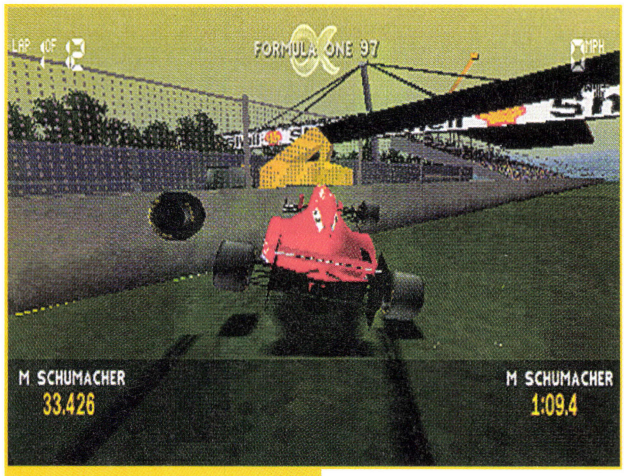
POWERED BY XnGine®

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS™
1370 Piccard Drive, Suite 120
Rockville, MD 20850-4304
BBS: 301 990-7552 • Fax: 301 926-8010
Website: http://www.bethsoft.com

KIDS TO ADULTS
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

XCar®, XnGine®, Bad Dog™ logo and Bethesda Softworks™ are trademarks of Media Technology Limited. Copyright © 1997 Media Technology Limited. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks, logos or graphics are the property of their respective owners.

TOYS



Formula 1 will look smashing on Canopus' 3Dfx card.

Canopus Grabs 3Dfx Power-Up

In the wake of Intergraph's announcement that it's producing an all-in-one Voodoo card, Canopus has revealed plans to be the second major Rendition-based video-accelerator maker to embrace 3Dfx's Voodoo chipset. Canopus will release a pass-through card called the Pure3D, which will incorporate a TV-out port for gamers who want to play their GLQuake on mom's big-screen. The Pure3D should street for under $180, but to get that price, the company decided not to include a game bundle. According to a Canopus spokesman, "People who want this card already own the games."

Monster Speakers?

USB what? For those of you wondering what can be done with that USB port on your new computer, Altec Lansing has some speakers they'd like you to listen to. The ADA49 is the first speaker/subwoofer set to make use of the new high-speed data port. For audio freaks, USB promises enhanced sound quality and less distortion than currently possible. And because USB is a true serial port, you can plug your new USB joystick into the back of the speaker system, along with 125 other USB devices. The ADA49 features two 20-watt speakers and one 40-watt subwoofer. Ship date and street price have yet to be announced.

Take 3D Audio games like Jedi Knight, add USB speakers, and some say computer audio will never be the same again.



Intel Uses Quad on Pentium II

If you hear some technogeek babbling about Deschutes, he's referring to a new Pentium II CPU family that boosts MHz speeds significantly. Just last month, we reported on 300MHz Pentium IIs around the corner. Early next year, you can expect a 333MHz Deschutes CPU. By the middle of 1998, don't be surprised to see 350MHz and 400MHz CPUs. What's more, these new processors will support a super-fast 100MHz motherboard bus. (Today's speediest motherboards are 66MHz.) Slow bus speed is one of the main reasons faster CPUs don't seem as fast as they should be.

Can you say 400MHz?



Double-Fast IDE

Look out: the computer industry is changing hard-drive standards just as you were getting used to Enhanced IDE. The new kid on the block is called Ultra DMA, and it widens the data path to the hard disk so that the maximum burst in transfers doubles from 16MB per second to 33MB per second. All new Intel motherboards support the new standard, and thankfully, Ultra DMA is fully backward-compatible with the IDE hard drive you already own. Even better, if you move your old hard drive into a new Ultra DMA machine, it'll move data more quickly. Seagate, Fujitsu, Western Digital, Maxtor, Toshiba, IBM, and other companies are already making Ultra DMA drives. Intel has a setup utility available for Win 95 installation at **ftp://download.intel.com/design/pcisets/busmastr/setupex.exe**.

New 56K Modem Player

ActionTec, which builds modems usually sold under other labels, is marketing its own new 56K modem called the DeskTalk. The unit supports the x2 56K and V42/MNP2.4 error-correction standards. Software BIOS upgrades for the ever-changing 56K scene can be downloaded from **www.actiontec.com**. The package includes speakerphone capabilities, along with data and fax transfers. ActionTec is pricing the DeskTalk at $179.

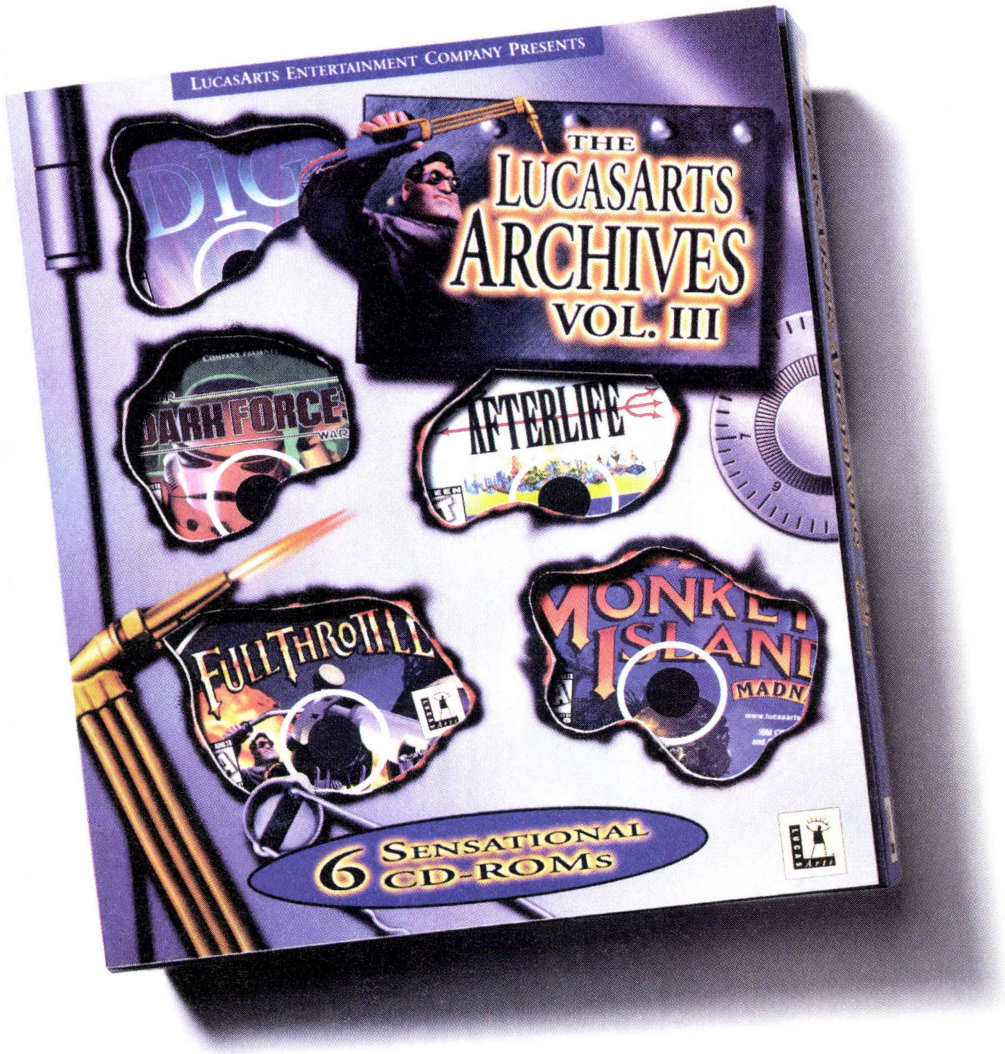
Tired of slow modem connections?



—George T. Chronis


PAX IMPERIA
EMINENT DOMAIN™
The largest, most sophisticated game universe ever created is at your control.
THQ INC
HELIOTROPE STUDIOS
WWW.PAXIMPERIA.COM
Designed for Microsoft Windows 95
MacOS

PREGNANT WOMEN, INDIVIDUALS WITH BACK PROBLEMS AND RECOVERING HERNIA PATIENTS SHOULD NOT LIFT THIS PACKAGE.



The LucasArts Archives™ Vol. III

Just a ton of award-winning games.

(Without spending a ton of money.)

INCLUDES

THE DIG® • FULL THROTTLE® • *STAR WARS*®: DARK FORCES®

AFTERLIFE® • MONKEY ISLAND™ MADNESS

PLUS A BONUS DEMO SAMPLER

FOR PC CD-ROM

www.lucasarts.com

The software in this collection is rated K-A to TEEN by the ESRB.

®, ™ & © 1997 Lucasfilm Ltd. and LucasArts Entertainment Company. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization.

Online-Game Connection

Compiled by Amy Crigger and Daniel Morris

GAME SERVICES

www.mpgn.com

Highlights: DragonGard, Empire Builder, Empires Dawn, Imperium, Junta, Kingdom of Drakkar, Operation Market-Garden

Exclusives: All

Upcoming: Drakkar II, FiefQuest, Search and Destroy, Skulls, Bones, and Buccaneers, Warlords of the Apocalypse

Rates: $9.95/mo.

AOL keyword: WorldPlay

Highlights: Baldies Online, Front Page Sports: Trophy Bass 2, Hearts, Heavy Damage, The Incredible Machine (TIM 3), SET, Warcraft II

Exclusives: All except Castles II: Siege

Upcoming: Fantasy Adventures Online, Fierce Harmony, MissionForce: CyberStorm, Poker, Shattered Light, Tetris Online

Rates: $1.99/hr. after allotted free time

www.2am.com

Highlights: Alliance & Defiance, Animated Chess, Backgammon, Chain of Command, Checkers, The Invisible Hand, Total War

Exclusives: All

Upcoming: Poker

Rates: $10/mo., or $30 to become a Founding Member (good until the end of the year)

www.gamesonline.com

Highlights: Descent Online, Dragon Dice, Rolemaster: The Bladelands, Rolemaster: Magestorm, Splatterball, U.S. Chess Federation, Warcraft II

Exclusives: All

Upcoming: Billboard Live! Trivia, Blood, Caesar's Palace Virtual Casino, Claw, Diablo, The Lost World: Jurassic Park

Rates: $1.95/hr.

www.gamestorm.com

Highlights: Air Warrior II, Aliens Online, Classic Card Games, Harpoon Online, Multiplayer BattleTech: Solaris, Online Casino 2, Silent Death

Exclusives: All

Upcoming: Jack Nicklaus Online Tour

Rates: $4.95/mo.

www.dwango.com

Highlights: Descent II, Duke Nukem Plutonium Pack, G-NOME, HeliCOPS, NetMech, Shadow Warrior, Terracide, Warcraft II

Exclusives: None

Upcoming: ABC's Monday Night Football, Age of Empires, CART Precision Racing, Crackerjack, Dominion, Microsoft Flight Simulator '98, Total Annihilation

Rates: $.99/hr. through Internet Gaming Zone

zone.com

Highlights: Close Combat, Go, Hellbender, Microsoft Golf 3.0, Monster Truck Madness, Pictionary, Scrabble

Exclusives: Outlaws, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter

Upcoming: Age of Empires, Baseball 3D, Battleship, CART Precision Racing, Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far, Fighter Ace, Flight Simulator '98, Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II, Risk, Star Wars: Rebellion

Rates: Free, except Fighter Ace (rates for this game have not yet been determined)

www.kali.net

Highlights: Any IPX-compatible game (e.g., Big Red Racing, Command & Conquer, Descent II, Diablo, Duke Nukem 3D, MOO II)

Exclusives: None

Upcoming: Kali works with most new games that are IPX-compatible

Rates: $20 one-time fee

www.stargatenetworks.com

Highlights: Any IPX-compatible game

Exclusives: None

Upcoming: Kahn works with most new games that are IPX-compatible

Rates: $15 one-time fee

www.mplayer.com

Highlights: Big Red Racing, C&C: Red Alert, Diablo, MechWarrior 2, Panzer General Online Only, Quake (WinQuake, GLQuake, VQuake), Risk, War Wind

Exclusives: Q-Ball (Quake mod), Quake Tournament Play

Upcoming: Chasm, Dominion, iM1A2 Abrams, Outlaw Racers, Star General, Take No Prisoners, WarBreeds, Warlords, Warlords III

Rates: Free; MPlayer Plus: $29.95/yr. for access to special online tournaments and sponsored events

www.ten.net

Highlights: Blood, C&C, C&C: Red Alert, Diablo, MOO II, Quake, Warcraft

Exclusives: AD&D: Dark Sun Online, Duke Nukem 3D, Duke Nukem 3D Atomic Edition, EF2000, Panzer General, Shadow Warrior (shareware and retail), Twilight Lands

Upcoming: Confirmed Kill, Dark Reign, Falcon 4.0, Myth: The Fallen Lords, NASCAR Racing 2, Prey, Top Gun, Wolfram

Rates: Flat rate: $19.95/mo.; hourly rate: $9.95/5 hrs. per mo., $1.95 each addtl. hr.



WORTHY GAME URLs

These days, a game can live forever. Add-ons, updates, and new information are available at a ton of cool fan sites, old and new. Here are some of our favorites; if you have some of your own, drop us a note at pcgamesletters@pcgames.com.

The Disco Puck
www.discopalace.com/discopuck/

Introspection Wing Commander Home Sector
introspect.wa.net/wchs/

The SimGateway
www.aim4game.com/sim/

Shlonglor's War 2
games.nextlevel.net/~fraizer/WAR2/war2.shtml

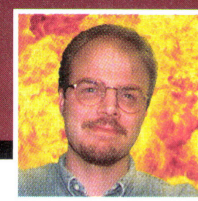
The Starcraft Canteen
www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Arcade/8076

CB's Gaming Extreme
cb.simplenet.com

Outlaws Unleashed
www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Alley/7318

Smokey's Outlaws Ranch
www.geocities.com/TImesSquare/Lair/8330

THE PLAYER



STEVE KLETT

As he settles down for a relaxing Thanksgiving dinner, The Player takes a moment to dis the year's worst games.

Golden Turkey Time

Ahhh, November—The Player's favorite time of year. Why? 'Cause it's time for his annual Golden Turkey Awards, of course. (Yeah, yeah—all that food, family, and football stuff is good, too.)

For those who missed them last year, the Golden Turkey Awards are the booby-prize equivalent of the Oscars. Each November, The Player hands them out to developers and publishers who tried to swindle gamers out of their hard-earned dollars over the previous year.

But before The Player breaks out his Turkey baster and gets to the awards, a brief rundown of the ground rules is in order. It's simple, really: There are no rules. A game doesn't have to be bad to win. No, Golden Gobblers can be awarded for every possible aspect of a game—from the beginning of its slimy PR campaign to its buggy patch release.

That said, sit back, grab some popcorn, beer, or YooHoo, and enjoy the show (black tie prohibited). Without further ado, the winners of The Player's Second Annual Golden Turkeys are, in no particular order:



Games

Each year, dozens of games hit the shelves that lead gamers to think certain publishers are more than a bit short in the gray-matter category. This year, the bad-games genre has expanded to include titles that hit the shelves missing vital components.

First up is AnyRiver Entertainment for its abysmal first (and last) product, A Fork in the Tale. This one is truly a puzzler for The Player. I mean, he doesn't have a marketing or business degree, but he does know that FMV games pretty much suck across the board. Why, then, would a company—formed and backed by proven game talent—stake its future on the success of an FMV title? A Fork in the Tale did some mildly interesting things, but it came off like one of those late-night Cinemax movies—just not nearly as good. AnyRiver no longer exists, and The Player doesn't like to kick a company that's down (and out), but it must be done. Is it really a surprise this one didn't sell?

In the same "What were they thinking?" FMV vein comes Soldier Boyz, published by Dreamcatcher Interactive and developed by the Motion Picture Corporation of America. This one was such obvious cheese that *PC Games* couldn't bear to soil a page of the magazine with a review of it. Like a direct-to-video movie, this review went right up on the Web so we could warn as many people as possible about the game as soon as it came out.

Then there are six games that all deserve special recognition for leaving out the obvious feature that would have helped them the most. What did Looking Glass Technologies' British Open Golf, Psygnosis' WipeOut XL and Formula 1, Rocket Science's Rocket Jockey, and MicroProse's Magic: The Gathering all have in common? Each lacked multiplayer capabilities—d'oh! To their credit, both Rocket Jockey and WipeOut XL (via patch) and MTG (via an add-on) have addressed this failing, but how they could neglect multiplay to begin with is a mystery. The last of the six is Activision/ParSoft's A-10 Cuba! for the PC. Beloved on the Mac for its realism, sophistication, and excellent printed manual, A-10 Cuba! touched down on the PC sans manual (regarded as an absolute necessity by the flight-sim crowd). PC pilots screamed, and Activision will not likely repeat its mistake.

The last winner in the games category is actually a repeat winner, and the toughest one of The Player's selections: Battlecruiser 3000AD. BC3K won in the vaporware category last year for its extremely prolonged development cycle. Imagine the shock when it was finally released, after years of development, in half-finished form. This game has undergone a multitude of major patches, and to developer Derek Smart's credit, it's now pretty much complete (and enjoyable). However, the simple truth is that, no matter what the reasons, the sad shape Battlecruiser was in upon release was inexcusable. Thus, another Golden Turkey goes to its publisher, Take 2 Interactive.

Vaporware

Thanks, though, to Take 2 for providing a decent segue to the next category—games that continually miss their ship dates. MicroProse and Bethesda Softworks are at the top of the list here, with Falcon 4.0 and Tenth Planet, respectively. The Player's seen each of these titles at all three E3s, so you'll have to forgive him next year if he can't maintain the proper enthusiasm level for demo number four.

Other winners include Pulse Entertainment's Space Bunnies Must Die! (which, despite rumors to the contrary, is not dead and will hop onto the PC under the Panasonic label early next year); Scavenger's Into the Shadows (dead—the company too); Blizzard's Starcraft (although all will likely be forgiven when it ships); and 7th Level's Return to Krondor (who knows?).

King of the Golden Turkeys

And now, the moment you've all been waiting for: The biggest Golden Turkey goes to none other than last year's winner, Acclaim. Yes, Acclaim manages to hold onto its title of King of Shovelware. Battlesport, Iron Man, MTG—Battlemage, The Crow...the list goes on. Can they make it three in a row? We'll have to wait and see.

That's it for 1997. As The Player sits back and awaits all of the holiday greeting cards this year's Golden Turkeys are sure to generate, he'd like to remind those vendors who didn't win that there's always next year.

Send comments and Golden Turkey nominees to ThePlayer@pcgames.com.

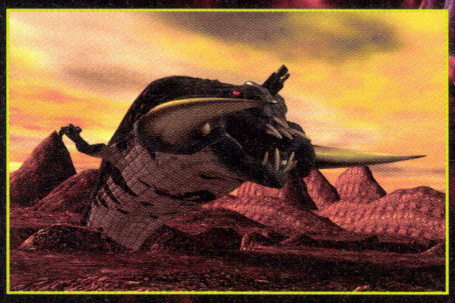
ILLUSTRATION BY BRUCE GARDNER

DEFIANCE™

"...real gameplay."
"... sharp 3D engine that looks like it could stand toe to toe with Quake™ ..."
PC Gamer



SUDDENLY, THE WALLS CAME CRASHING DOWN AND ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE.



YOUR ENEMY IS PART BIOLOGICAL, PART MECHANICAL AND 100% KILLER!

LOOK FOR IT SOON!

- 3D acceleration for 3Dfx and Rendition and others plus MMX. Brilliant 640 x 480 Super VGA resolution.
- Compelling story. Solve baffling puzzles to advance between levels. Smooth 3D combat with TruFlow™ technology.
- 18 different horrific creatures attack you again and again from above, below and in your face!
- Death Match battle for up to 8 players over network or modem.
- Immersive 3D cinematics between 13 intense levels and, if you ever get there, an epic movie at the shocking conclusion.

VISCERAL PRODUCTIONS
GAMES WITH GUTS

Logicware

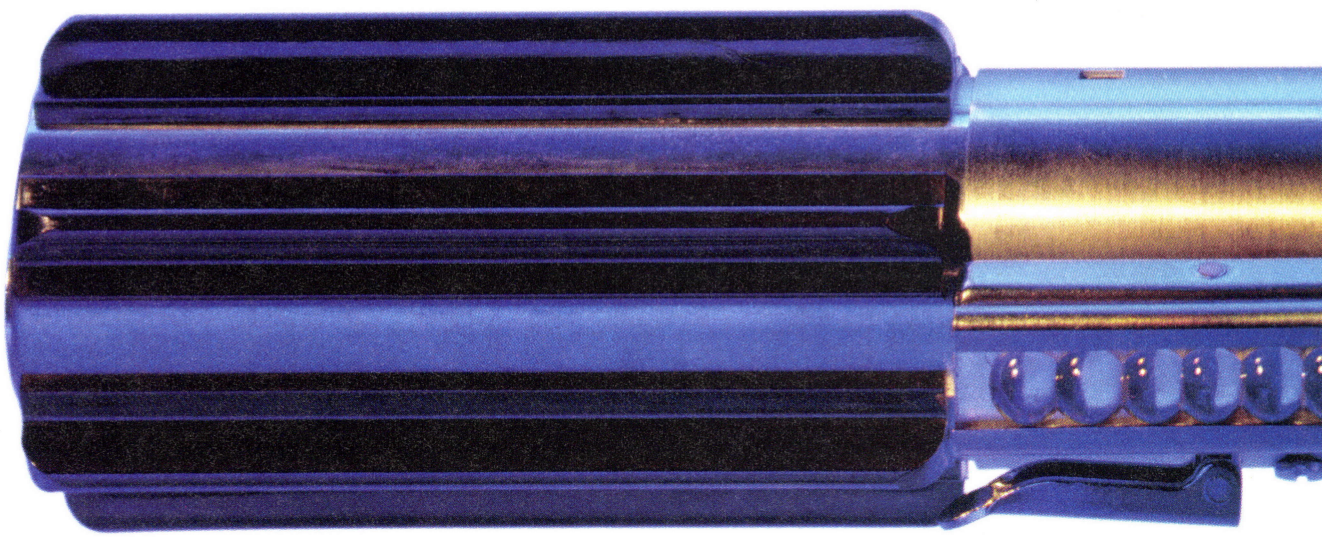
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

IF IT'S BATTLE YOU WANT, IT'S BATTLE YOU'LL GET!

© 1997 Visceral Productions, Baltimore, MD
A DIVISION OF AVALON HILL GAME COMPANY
4517 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214-3192

Visit our web site: www.avalonhill.com
1-800-999-3222

Quake, 3Dfx, Rendition and MMX are trademarks of their respective owners. All right reserved.
Visceral, TruFlow and LaserLok are trademarks of Visceral Productions.
Defiance is a trademark of Visceral Productions and Logicware, Inc.

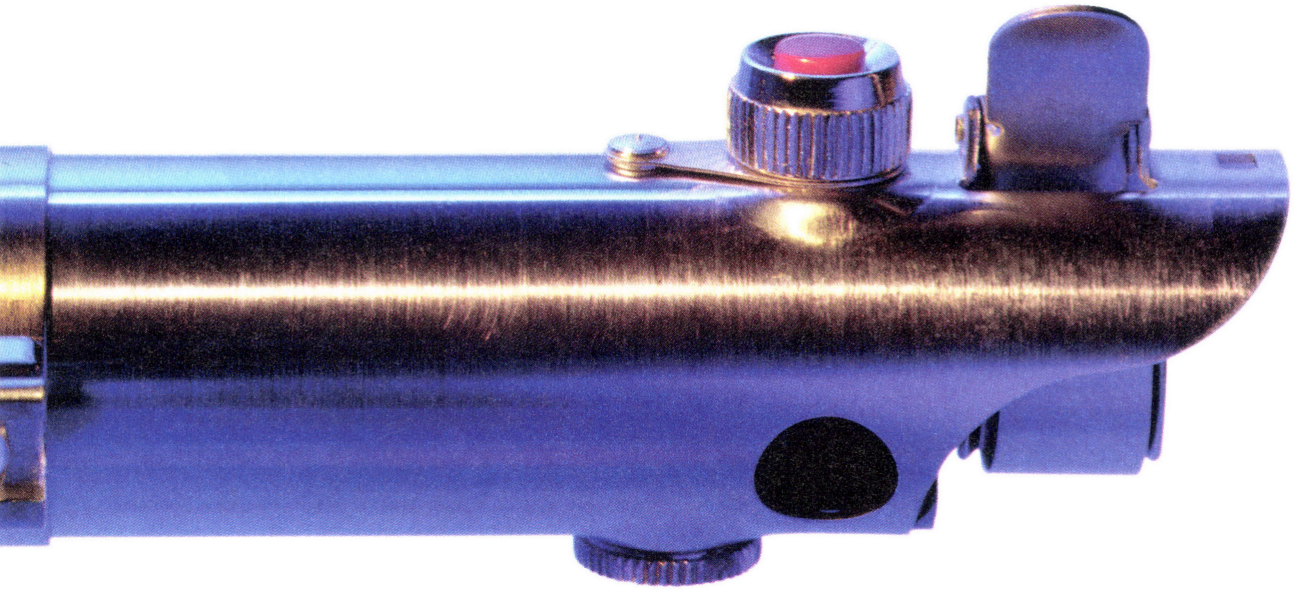


TEEN
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

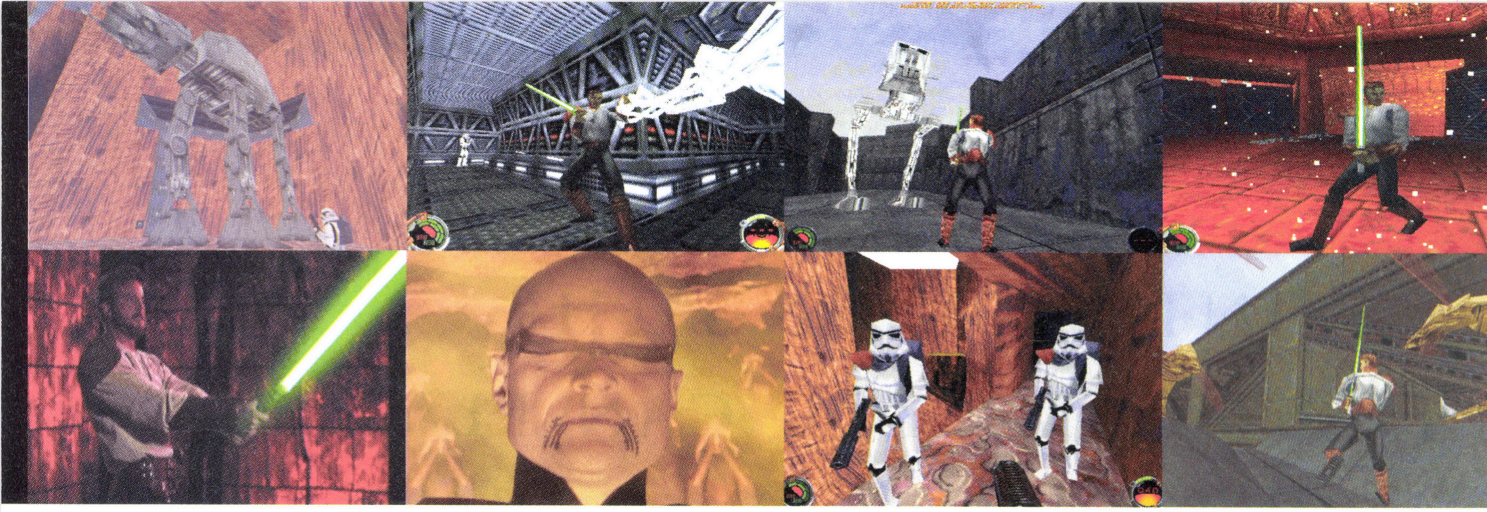
LUCAS
Arts

®, ™ & © 1997 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization.
Star Wars, Dark Forces and the LucasArts logos are registered trademarks,
and Jedi Knight is a trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd.

INTRODUCING THE FIRST GAME YOU CAN PLAY WITH THIS JOYSTICK.

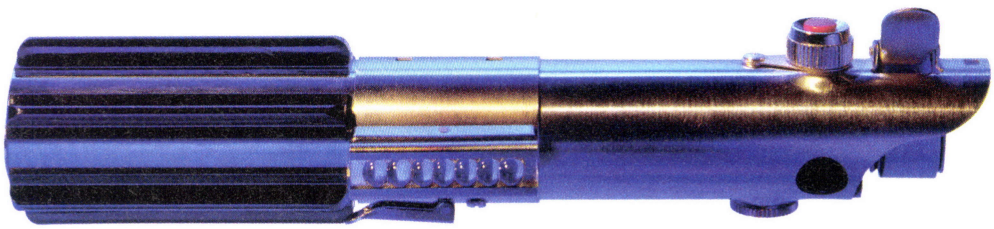


THE LIGHTSABER. THE ELEGANT WEAPON OF THE *STAR WARS*® SAGA. NEVER BEFORE HAS ANYONE BUT A JEDI KNIGHT BEEN WORTHY OF CARRYING ONE. UNTIL NOW.



STAR WARS® JEDI KNIGHT™

DARK FORCES® II



JEDI KNIGHT™: DARK FORCES® II CONFRONTS YOU WITH THE JOYS OF JEDI KNIGHTHOOD. THERE'S COMBAT. MORE COMBAT. (DID WE MENTION COMBAT?) YOU LIVE LIFE AS A MARKED JEDI. INTERGALACTIC ASSASSINS ABOUND ON TWENTY-ONE 3-D LEVELS, EACH WITH THE SINGULAR INTENT OF PUTTING "I KILLED A JEDI" ON THEIR RESUMÉS. BOSSK, GORC, JEREC - EACH EVIL ENEMY YOU FACE WANTS YOUR JEDI SKULL ON A STICK. AND THERE'S DEFINITELY NO JOY IN THAT.

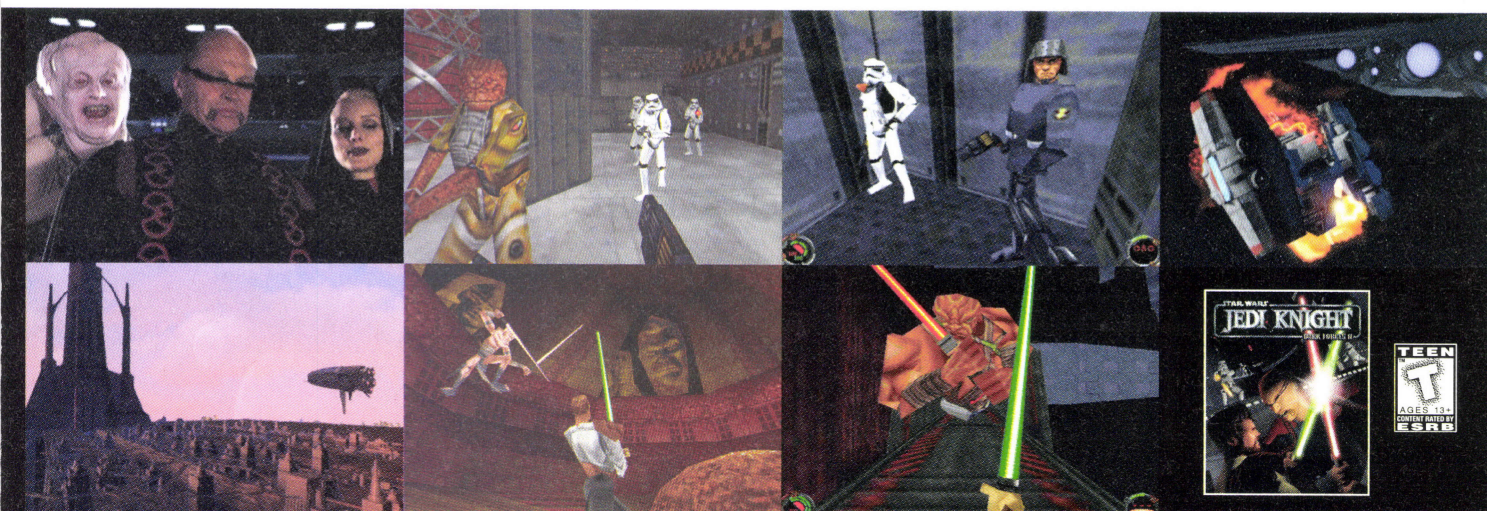
www.lucasarts.com

INTERNET GAMING ZONE
play it on zone.com

THE OFFICIAL STAR WARS WEBSITE:
www.starwars.com

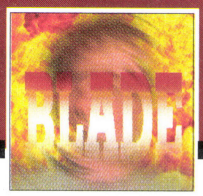
LUCAS Arts

® ™ & © 1997 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization. *Star Wars*, Dark Forces, and the LucasArts logos are registered trademarks, and Jedi Knight is a trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd.





THE OPPONENT



BLADE

"Gamers who take on the responsibility of beta testing shouldn't need rewards: the job itself is reward enough."

I Was a Teenage Online-Game Tester

The following yarn, spun by The Opponent, depicts how online-game testers can truly be—in his not-so-humble opinion—monsters.

Foaming at the mouth, eyes ablaze with a crackling fire, the monsters sat on their haunches, waiting for the moment to strike. They had stalked their prey for months—since it had first appeared in the open, blinking in the early light of a new morning. The monsters watched as the prey grew from a stuttering shadow, through the growing pangs of confusion mixed with expectation of what it would one day become. Growth was slow at first, but the prey soon established itself as a fully realized entity. The monsters salivated at the prospect of ripping its entrails out.

But monsters are impatient creatures, and a flurry of growth in the prey led to a frantic rush to its pen. They scrabbled at the door for the first sniff of the new beast. What the monsters found was never enough to satiate them, so the pent-up enthusiasm for the new plaything turned from eager excitement to drooling, blind desire.

After months of lying in wait, after the door to the pen was cranked open a fraction and then callously slammed in the monsters' faces, the prey was let loose. Oh, how the monsters feasted. They embraced their prey with a devoted passion. They tossed and turned it, played with and broke it. They snapped off limbs, then glued them back on.

But among the monsters were those who understood their role in the prey's development. They witnessed the growing pains of this new animal and took it in their stride, even offering help and encouragement. Then there were those who failed to understand their greater role. It wasn't to terrorize, pillage, cheat, or fiddle. The role of the monster was to nurture. Slowly, this was realized—but only after a most cunning monster among the pack cheated and pillaged and struck a cruel blow to the prey's heart.

Naturally, the prey retreated. It was supposed to be nurtured, not maimed. A terrible crime had been committed, and the offending monster paid with its life.

So the monsters are, in fact, required to nurture; that's the key. Online-game creators are breaking new ground. To test their capabilities and turn the paper-and-pencil theories into online-gaming realities, they need gamers' help. In return, the salivating hordes get a crack at a potentially great game for free, with no guarantees and no expectations. Sadly, many monsters fail to realize the "no expectations" angle. They expect, and they are wrong to do so.



ILLUSTRATION BY BRUCE GARDNER

The coming year will see even more opportunities for gamers to get truly involved in the evolution of online games and game worlds. But are they up to it as a collective pack? In case you haven't guessed, The Opponent's yarn depicts the infamous Assassination of Lord British in Ultima Online's beta test—by a gamer who exploited game bugs rather than reported them. There's a crucial purpose surrounding the beta test of any game: It's to test the servers, the software, the balance, the handling. Why? So that those ravenous gamers can eventually have a cohesive, entertaining, and fully functional game environment to lose themselves in.

It's a responsibility that many take too lightly. This is a time when Joe Average Gamer gets to have a say in the way a future game works. It may be to inform the company that something doesn't work—so much the better, as that problem will likely be fixed. But it's not just a free ride to some fun times.

For these games to succeed, grow, and provide the entertainment the pack requires, they need to prove that a business can be built. To that end, companies loose the prey on an unsuspecting public to gauge all manner of factors. FireTeam, Aliens Online, and Uprising are just a few of the games going into public beta testing, but it's not going to do anyone any good to have problems and bugs exploited for such trivial reasons as infamy.

Gamers who take on the responsibility of beta testing shouldn't need rewards: the job itself is reward enough. Exploitation of the system has worked in one extremely well-documented case, but who wins in the end? Sure, Origin learned a lesson (always reset the "invulnerable" tag). However, with so many opportunities on the way to get involved in a key element of the game industry's future, those taking an active part should realize their responsibility.

PCG_Blade can be found reporting bugs to the appropriate authorities in many of the online-game environments springing up. See you with a Wall of Fire scroll. Send flames to blade@pcgames.com.

Available August 21

The Future Is About To Become History

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD









Journey to the far future to save the distant past. Battle hand-to-hand. Solve intriguing puzzles. Wield powerful magic. Explore a huge 3D world. Your mission: retrieve the legendary sword Excalibur.

Featuring over 200 locations, 60 different characters, full speech, and incredible realistic light-sourcing, Excalibur 2555 is an absolute epic.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers"
— *Edge*

"Excalibur 2555 is one of the most unique 3D games ever... a really, really cool game"
— *Diehard Gamefan*

SIRTECH

PlayStation

PC CD ROM

Tel.: (315) 393-6633 Fax: (315) 393-1525
To order, visit your retailer or call: 1-800-447-1230

www.sir-tech.com

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

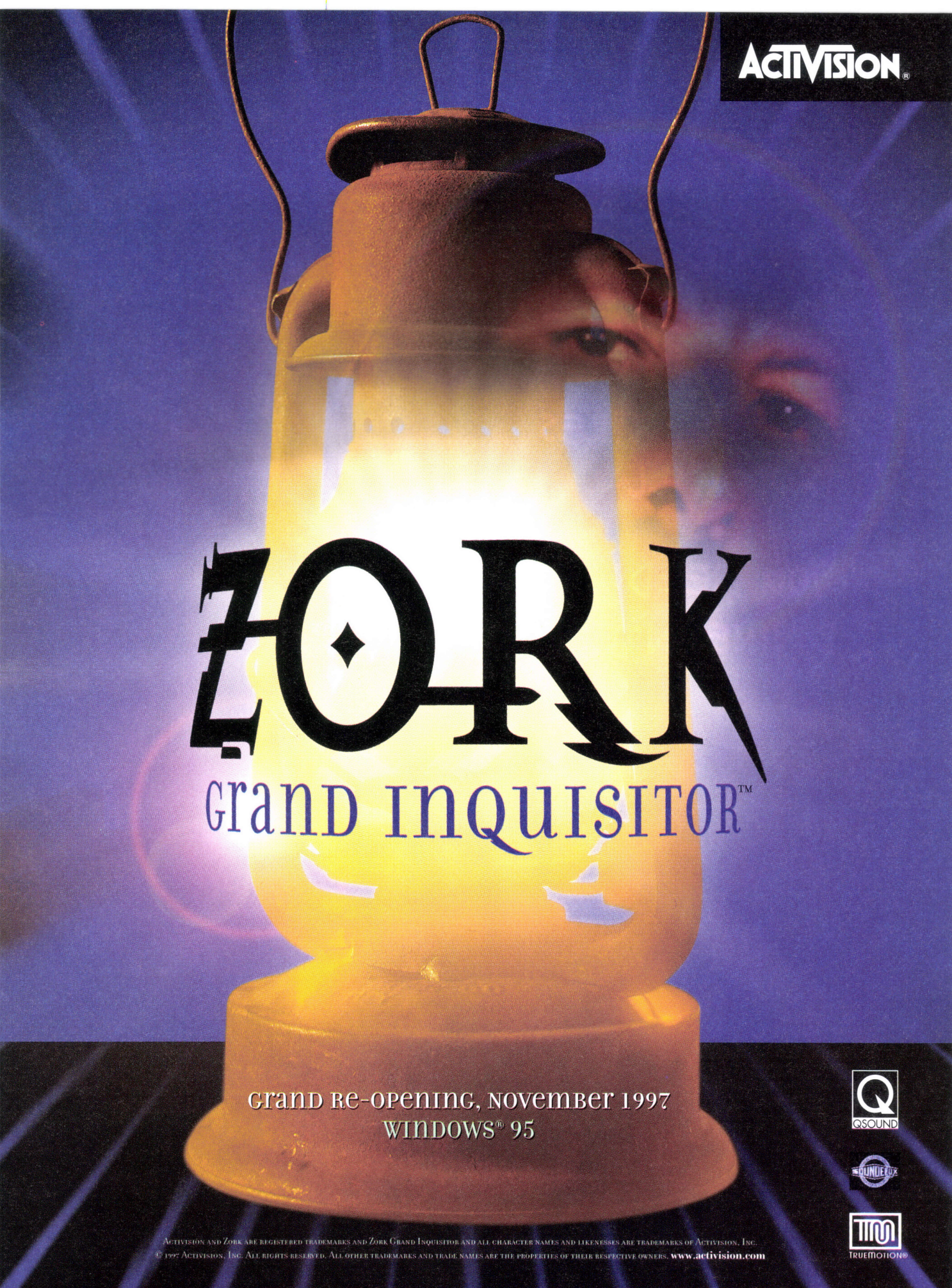
PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

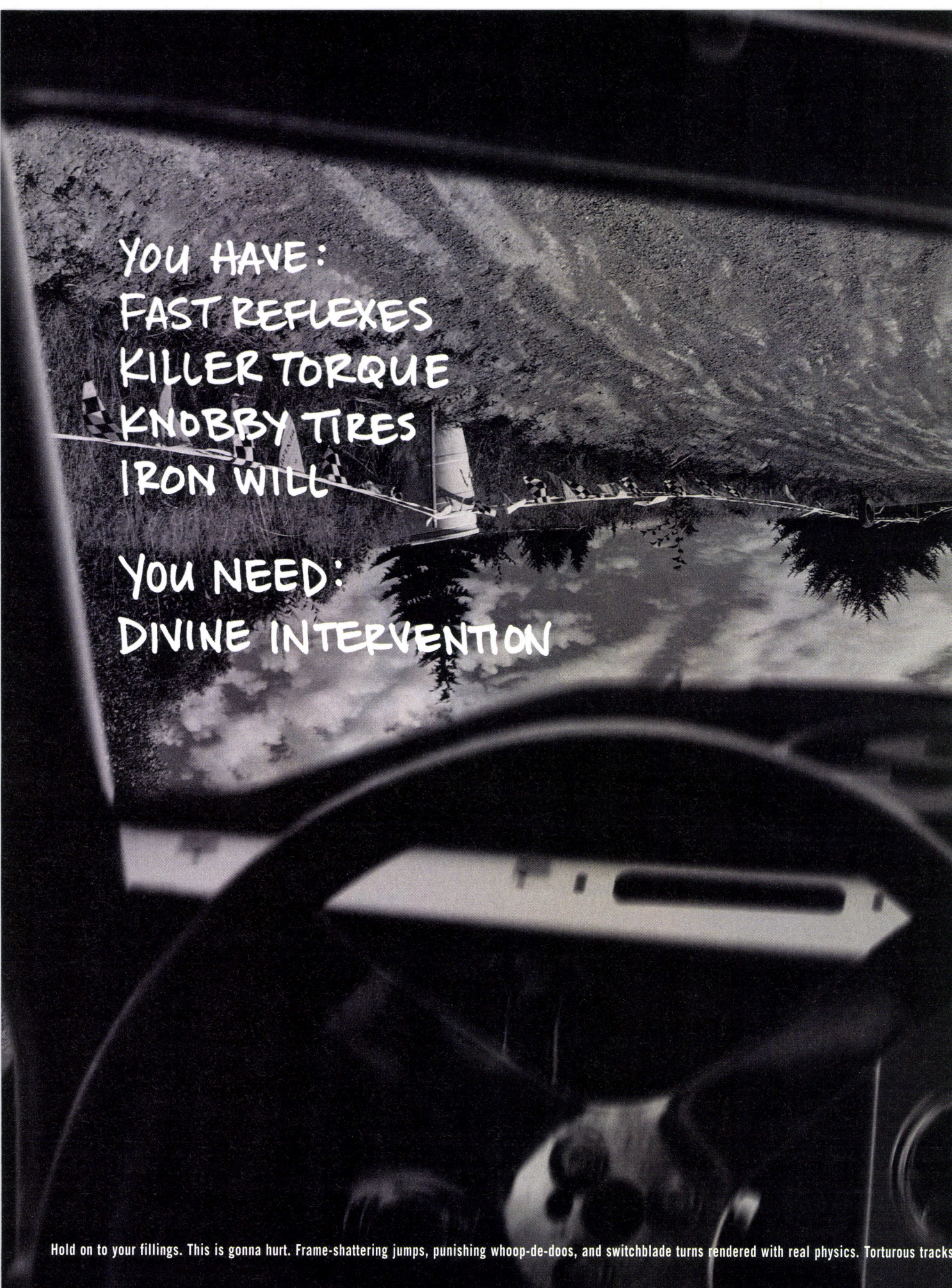
TELSTAR



Actual 360° views from the game

NOW ALL IT HAS IS YOU. Since 1979, evil forces have tried to destroy magic in Zork. Now a mighty oppressor threatens to take the "great" out of the great underground empire forever. The Grand Inquisitor is a failed magician who claims technology will make magic obsolete. And, you're the only adventurer brave enough to stop him. It could only happen underground.


ACTIVISION®
ZORK
GRAND INQUISITOR™
GRAND RE-OPENING, NOVEMBER 1997
WINDOWS® 95
QSOUND
SOUNDFX
TRUEMOTION®
ACTIVISION AND ZORK ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS AND ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR AND ALL CHARACTER NAMES AND LIKENESSES ARE TRADEMARKS OF ACTIVISION, INC.
© 1997 ACTIVISION, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ALL OTHER TRADEMARKS AND TRADE NAMES ARE THE PROPERTIES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. www.activision.com



Hold on to your fillings. This is gonna hurt. Frame-shattering jumps, punishing whoop-de-doos, and switchblade turns rendered with real physics. Torturous tracks



©1997 Software Allies, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Published by Sierra On-Line, Inc.®, Bellevue, WA 98007. Papyrus™ and the Papyrus logo are trademarks of Papyrus. SODA® is a registered trademark of the Short Course Off-Road Drivers Association.

The Wages of Sin

By George T. Chronis



Don't think of Sin as just another Quake clone. We bring you the first look at the Ritual offering that takes the Quake engine way beyond the capabilities you know and love.

The guys at Ritual Entertainment are making *their* game. Sure, they have a superb knowledge of the inner mysteries of the Quake engine; as Hipnotic, they put together the outstanding Scourge of Armagon level pack for Quake. And true, they chose to power Sin with that very same Quake engine. But just like the game's arch-villainess, Elixis, the Ritual crew has a distinct creative vision of its own for Sin, and everything else is but a means to an end.

When was the last time you played a first-person action game in which the plot and its characters changed in direct response to your actions? With the possible exception of Velocity's Strife, you haven't. This is new territory for shooters—mindshare real estate that Sin will be sharing only with the likes of Jedi Knight and Half-Life.

That's not all that's different. You hear a lot of whining from the computer-game press bemoaning the lack of good stories and good storytellers—especially where first-person action games are concerned. Dare it be said? Sin actually has a plot, and a damn compelling one at that.

And for those of you in the "Who cares? Quake 2 makes everything else obsolete" crowd, don't judge Sin by its soon-to-be-humble Quake engine. Ritual has written what amounts to a whole new layer of engine code on top of John Carmack's original. Broadly, the most important additions circumvent

Quake C—making it much easier to create levels with enhanced AI and to install 16-bit color. This opens up new opportunities for enhanced visuals in both SVGA and 3D-accelerated modes that'll make designers of other shooters delirious with envy.

Although Sin isn't due until next March and will be one of the last in the series of Quake-based games that includes Hexen II, Daikatana, Half-Life, and Duke Nukem Forever, what's transpiring in nondescript Suite 220 in a downtown Dallas building is anything but last year's news. In fact, Sin may give Quake 2 and Jedi Knight a run for their money.



Don't ask what's in the tanks. Remember *Soylent Green*?

AMBITIONS

If ambition can be quiet, then that's exactly what's happening at Ritual. Most of these guys come from noble game blood—specifically, previous stints at Apogee/3D Realms. Programmers Mark Dochtermann and Jim Dosé, level designer Richard "Levelord" Gray, art director Michael Hadwin, and 3D artist Robert Atkins all worked on Duke Nukem 3D. Program manager Joe Selinske did some time at Microsoft working on Hellbender and Monster Truck Madness between his Apogee days and joining Ritual. So do you hear these guys talking about what they did together on Rise of the Triad, Terminal Velocity, or Duke? Nope, they'd rather not talk about that stuff at all—it's all old news to them. What counts to this bunch is making the games they want to make and chugging down a few beers to take the bite off that hot Texas weather.

"From day one, we knew we wanted to work together to design a full project—our own game—but that wasn't enough to start a company and get the necessary financing," says CEO Harry Miller, who has impeccable online credentials from his days at the H2H Gaming Network and DWANGO. "We needed something incendiary to get us off the ground, and Scourge of Armagon was it."



According to Miller, getting the "go" light to design the first official Quake level pack was enough to get the financing needed to assemble what became the Ritual team. More importantly, Scourge was a high-profile project that could be completed on a swift six-month schedule.

"It was great because we could prove what we were capable of in only six months, and based on that success, we were then able to get everyone's attention and support to get our own game project moving," Miller says.

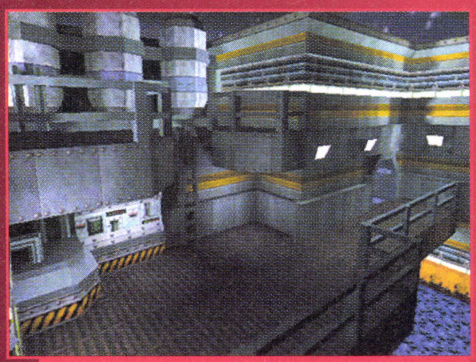
He notes that it took only five weeks following the completion of Scourge to finalize the main story elements of Sin and assemble the business assets to make it. But Miller admits that everyone at Ritual started talking about what Sin should be at about the same time as they were starting work on Scourge. "One reason it only took us five weeks was that the story had been evolving for some time," he reveals.

CONCEPT

Despite the intimate knowledge of the Quake engine that Scourge gave the Ritual crew, Dosé says Sin didn't begin as a technology-driven project in search of a story. The concepts for characters came first, the story second, and the technology third.

"All of us wanted to build situations in the game around strong characters," Dosé says. "It's typical in action games not to feature a strong and clearly actualized nemesis. We didn't want throwaway villains that add nothing to the gameplay and are only cannon fodder. What we did want were nemeses like the super-villains in comic books that have a history, a backstory—something to make them interesting."

Enter Sin's No. 1 Villain, bad girl Elixis Sinclair. Her father, a noted biogeneticist who controls a multinational biotechnology firm



Expect to play land, sea, and beneath-the-sea levels.

called SinTech, has fallen into disrepute. Elixis picks up her father's work with a passion—intent on advancing the human species through genetic engineering. Despite her noble goal, her passion to reclaim her father's glory leads her to dispense with the normal scientific checks and balances, and she begins her slide into evil.

Taking a completely opposite path is Colonel John Blade. Saddled with a stern father as a child, Blade rebels and has a pretty rough upbringing on the streets, Selinske says.

"Blade has a past—a life of crime. At some point he tires of it all and decides to use what he knows to make a positive impact on society. By the time the events in Sin take place, Blade is running one of the largest privatized security firms. It's when Blade discovers there are strange things happening on the streets that seem to be connected that he starts sniffing at Elixis' trail," he says.

With its main characters set, the story began to take shape and grow as an ongoing struggle between two extremely strong-willed people intent on fulfilling their individual destinies. But, as Miller points out, Sin had to tell this story within the framework of a first-person shooter.

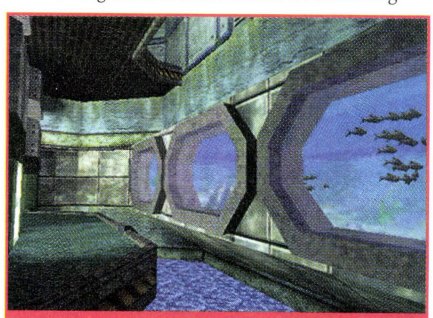
"Our own creative mission has been to find a way of telling this story and maintain the speed of an action game," Miller says. "As a single-player experience, Sin has to be fast and involving."

STORY

Granted, blowing things up in a masterful fashion is plenty involving for a lot of action gamers, but what if there's context to the action? Wouldn't that make for a better single-player experience? Ritual thinks so.

Sin starts off giving players control of Blade. Despite the best efforts of Blade's security teams, criminal activity is up, and the first mission in the game starts off as an investigation of the ballooning crime rate. One of the things confronting Blade is that there's also something amiss with drug addicts in the cities: they're disappearing. Although ordinary citizens like their clean streets, Blade digs deeper, and clues linking SinTech to the goings-on start turning up. What players learn as they pursue those clues is that Elixis is testing her gene-enhancing drugs on junkies, and she's using the criminal community to help her grab the guinea pigs. But Elixis has two problems: First, she's running out of addicts to fuel her research, and second, Blade is on her trail.

As the story unfolds, a third primary character, as yet unnamed, appears. This sidekick of Blade's is a youthful human who provides necessary details on new opponents and innocent bystanders, and he offers suggestions on how to navigate the levels. He serves as a window to the outside world for Blade as he dives deeper into Elixis' accelerating plans.



By using 16-bit color, Ritual can add detail effects unlike any you've seen before, such as these underwater vistas full of fish.

WEAPONS

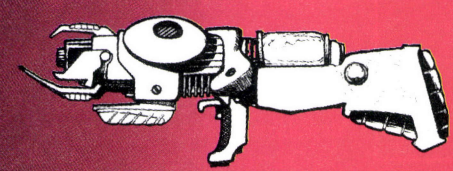
When *PC Games* saw Sin, weapons were still mostly under wraps. Already well in the works are a plasma rifle and a double-barreled mortar launcher. But outside of these two weapons and a stylized handgun that Blade will be using, Ritual isn't saying much about the types of guns you'll have available when Sin is released. The one steadfast answer we got was that the artists and designers want to best Turok in weapon-choice variety.

What we can tell you is that there will be some mass-destruction weapons, as well as some decidedly odd concoctions from the Ritual creative staff. One delightful device we happened to sneak a peek at is sort of a handheld combination of a transporter from *Star Trek* and a vacuum cleaner. You can use it to suck other players up and hold them in stasis. Later, you can shoot them out to a high level where they expand to full size again. But hold them in the gun too long, and they'll expand right in your face and telefrag you. One nice touch: anyone in stasis will get a tunnel-vision view down the barrel of the gun.

Ritual is also pondering the inclusion of special hidden Easter-egg weapons in solo-player levels. These will be "research" weapons that have specialized options. Since players will be nosing around into quite a few SinTech scientific facilities, they could stumble onto a cool prototype with only five shots. You won't know what it does until you fire it, and—if it doesn't compress you into a quantum particle—once the ammo is gone, it's gone.



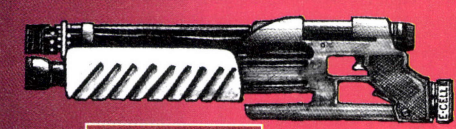
L2-357 Magnum



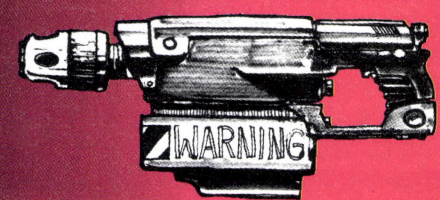
M1 Quantum Destablizer



CLASSIFIED



Rok 12 Shotgun



CLASSIFIED

"We want Sin to be a more cohesive experience than tacking together a sequence of throw-away levels," Dosé says. "When players get into Sin, they will see events later in the game change as a result of their actions. Everything a player does compounds."

Miller says Sin is currently slated to have six missions that bring Blade closer to his final confrontation with Elixis—each with an action-based outcome. In each mission, however, there will be multiple ways to complete and exit it. Each exit route will have a story component in addition to an action component. What's more, action choices will change what happens in upcoming missions.

"At each of these decision points, events in upcoming missions may diverge slightly or dramatically," Miller says. "These diversions are not harder or easier, just different."

Like a good horror movie, Sin missions and levels will often build tension steadily, release it suddenly, then shift gears and build it again to keep players off-guard, says Dosé. He expects there will be some *Die Hard*–style humor thrown in for good measure—brotherly rivalry with the sidekick rather than Duke-style slapstick.

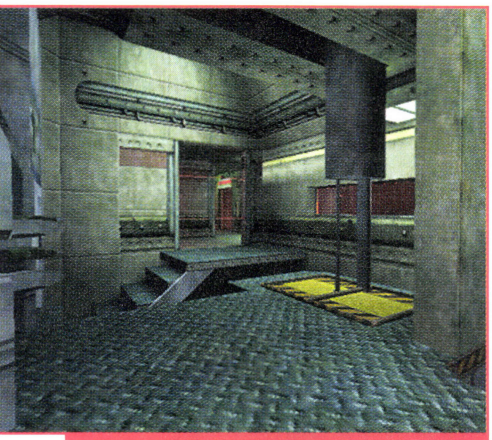


Former criminal Blade now uses his skills to fight crime.

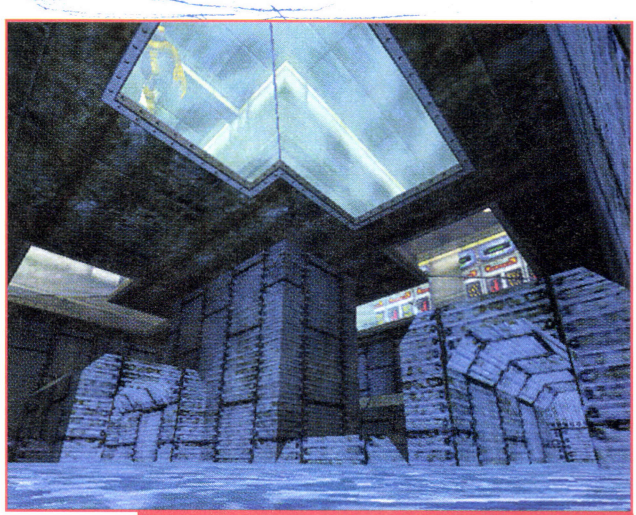
SOLO LEVELS

"In addition to all that story stuff, I can tell you Sin will give [players] a lot to keep them happy," Selinske says. "Every first-person game has been an influence in our level design, but Sin proves action shooters can be more than kill, kill, kill."

The first step out of the killing fields for the Sin crew was assigning broad goals for the levels. The first goal was building in more interactivity than any other action game on the market—a tall order, when you consider all the breakables, switches, panels, ducts, and doors in the likes of Duke Nukem 3D. But given their intimate association with the Dukester, the Ritual crew knows what it will take to up the bar. Simply put, if it looks like it works, it will work, Selinske says.



Expect every level to have a ton of moving items and interactive equipment.



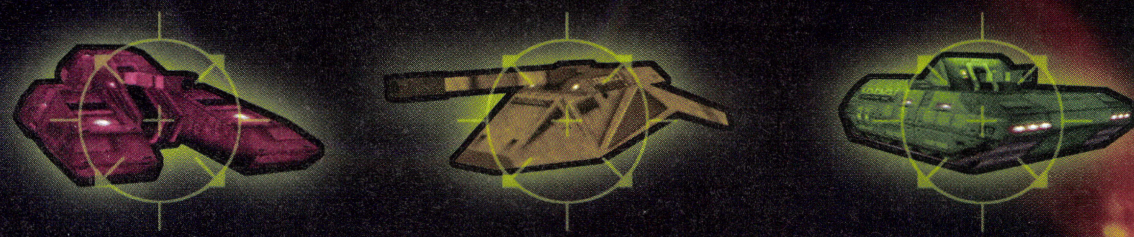
Screw up and you'll find yourself captured and under the watchful eye of a Dark Captain.

Rest assured that when you visit the Levelord's geothermal level, some of those air-conditioning ducts are navigable. Not very Quake-like, perhaps, but an awful lot of fun. But Dosé says Sin's level designers are leaving "Gee, that was cute" interactivity behind in favor of practical and realistic events.

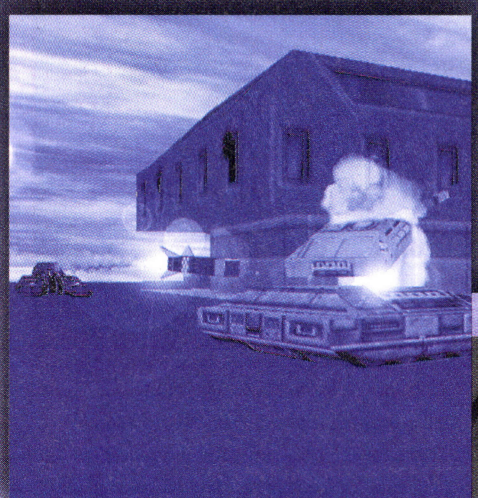
"You have to be careful what you shoot at. If you blow up too many computer panels in a power plant, you could end up shutting down the core and causing a meltdown that kills you and everyone else," Dosé says. "Or, if you take out an air-circulation fan, you may find out what it's like to die of asphyxiation. There are no boundaries to the interactivity in Sin, and you can expect some amazingly complex sequences to be set in motion by the triggering of certain switches."

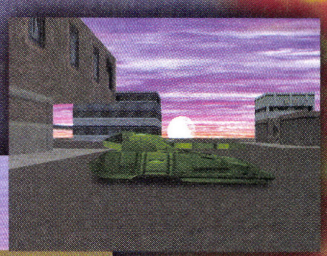
TANARUS™

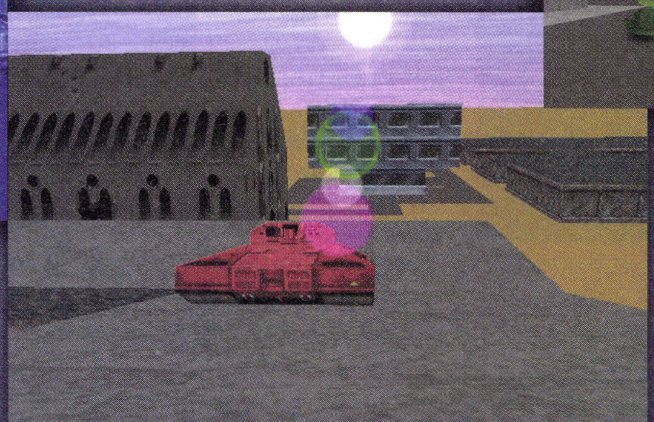
The planet you wish you never heard of and launches its attack on Windows®



TANARUS sets a new standard in multiplayer action-strategy gaming — delivering futuristic tank warfare either online or on disc. Pick your team, load up your tank, and let it roll. Experience killer graphics as you navigate through sun-baked deserts, futuristic cityscapes and frigid snow-swept lands. Plant mines, fire an array of deadly missiles, and blow the opposition to kingdom come.







RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

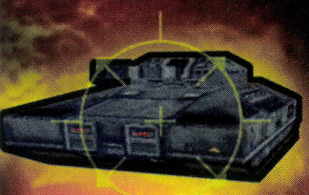
Sony Interactive Studios America

Tanarus is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. ©1997 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Windows 95 is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.



has just declared war on the internet,

95 this fall.



TANK WARFARE AVAILABLE IN STORES FOR WINDOWS® 95 FALL 1997

EXPLOSIVE ACTION BEGINS NOW AT http://www.tanarus.com

MULTIPLAYER GAMING ONLINE
No AI online — every tank commander is very real — or practice solo with Windows® 95 version.

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS
Chat with tank teammates, or psych-out the opposition on an open line.

FULL CUSTOMIZATION
Customize controls and peripherals, then choose from 5 different tanks with more than 30 different weapons modules.

POUNDING EFFECTS
Feel the effects that day and night cycles, and weather have on your tank drive.

According to the Levelord, the short list of breakables in Sin includes containers, bridges, glass, door panels, and pipes. You can also expect to see lots of moving items, including ceiling fans, dials, cranes, oil drills, food processors, and vehicles.

Ritual's second level tenet was to design nonlinear exit routes. Most gamers are used to main exits and occasional secret exits in their shooters. Usually, the route from the beginning of a level to its exit is fairly straightforward. But in Sin, Selinske says, you might traverse a level at ground zero, go underground, or head into the rafters. Any route they take will put players face-to-face with a different set of possible opponents and creatures, and each set will lead to a different potential mission outcome. There will also be a stealth philosophy here; Selinske says the game is skewed in such a way that there's always a stealthy way to traverse a level that minimizes engagements with enemies. So if you're low on health, you can find a less dangerous route if you look carefully.

Level commandment number three was to populate the game with diverse inhabitants. Some are your enemies, others are innocent citizens, and quite a few are simply indifferent to you. What Ritual is striving for is to keep players from seeing and killing the same monsters over and over again. Miller says there will be no lack of challenging bosses to be dealt with, but leading up to those confrontations will be a plethora of creatures in a number of character classes (see "Rogue's Gallery" for a list).

The fourth level law was all about style and looks. Sin levels look outstanding. We got a taste of what Ritual could do with bright colors and expansive levels in Scourge; in Sin they've increased that performance by jumping into the aforementioned 16-bit color palette (more about this under CODE). On the containment level, force-fields pulsate and Dark Captains behind plate glass stare at you through the ceiling. In the sub-base level, you look out through Plexiglas portals at schools of fish meandering through their daily routines. Come outside on the oil-rig level, and you'll be greeted by the moon hanging over the horizon,

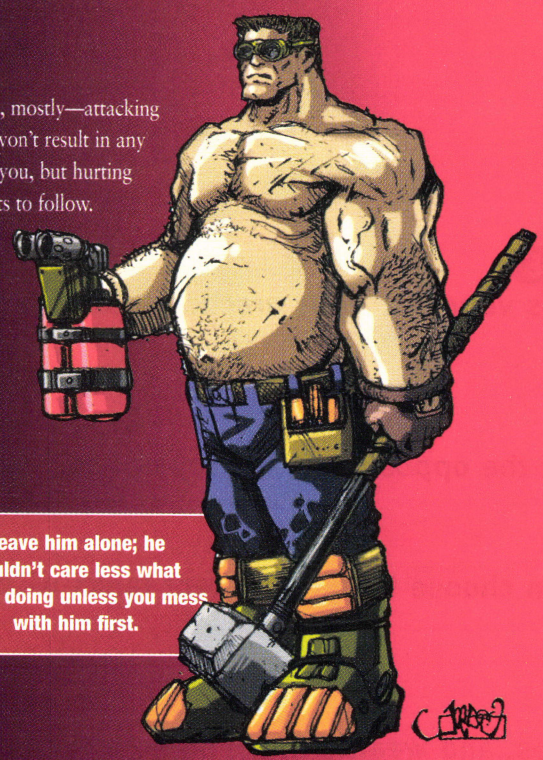


Blow up this power-plant control room and the whole facility could go.

ROGUE'S GALLERY

Bystanders

Civilians and workers, mostly—attacking or killing these folks won't result in any really ugly results for you, but hurting them could alter events to follow.



Leave him alone; he couldn't care less what you're doing unless you mess with him first.



Dark Captains are Elixis' main enforcers in her genetic crimes.

Guards

Elixis' real heavies are her Dark Captains—armor-suited guards who protect sensitive facilities and prod throngs of mutants along. If there's any adversary you'll see often, it'll be these plasma-rifle–equipped dudes. Ritual will likely add additional guard classes with variations in equipment and characteristics. Also, expect to see some interesting mutants turn up as guards.



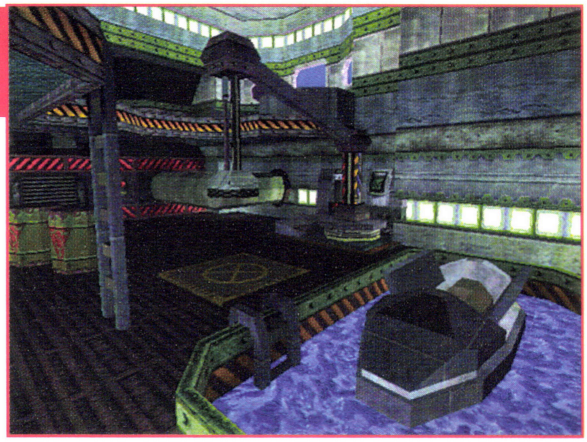
The Seabonites are an underwater variation of the Dark Captains.

casting light and shadows over a dancing ocean lapping along the shores of a nearby island. We especially like the rocking speedboat tied up to the rig. (Yes, you can sink it.)

"By using 16-bit color, we get the freedom to create a much higher level of detail than we could ever muster in Scourge," Atkins says. "We want each mission to be in a totally unique place."

To get the level designers in the mood to take advantage of the detail options available to them, Atkins says Miller and Selinske ordered everyone at Ritual to go out and embrace architecture in the real world—for a better grounding in form and function, and to discover unique designs for new ideas.

"We looked everywhere for inspiration—the warehouse down the street, movies, you name it," Selinske says. "*Die Hard*, *Aliens*, *Star Wars*, anime—anything with high-tech, cool architecture. Every level has a theme or architectural hook inspiring it. And each solo map should have a deathmatch equivalent."



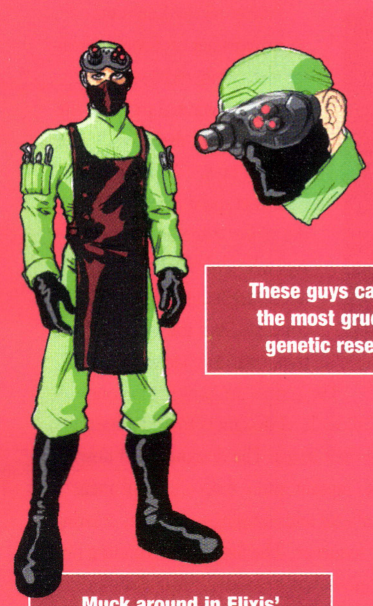
On this level, Blade must defuse a nuclear weapon. See that crane? It moves!

DM LEVELS

"Everyone here hates campers. I can guarantee you that the deathmatch levels in Sin are going to be balanced so that no one style of play gets an advantage," Selinske says.

As much as the Ritual crew wants Sin to be an involving single-player game, they are diehard deathmatchers, and Sin's not going out the door without multiplayer appeal. In fact, both Dosé and Selinske maintain that gamers will be confronted with what amounts to separate solo and multiplayer games. In the case of the latter, the plan is for up to 10 unique DM levels.

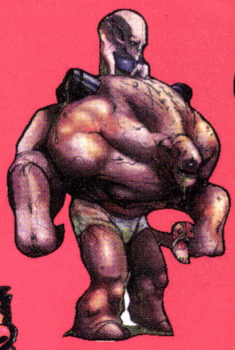
"I'm sure that a lot of sniper guys will find things to like with the single-player maps, and you'll be able to play those maps in deathmatches,



Muck around in Elixis' genetic empire and you'll see plenty of these lab technicians.



These guys carry out the most gruesome genetic research.





Eon is the big hulking guy with the dumb expression. Peon is the brains of the team. It makes a difference which one you shoot first.



As you delve deeper into SinTech facilities, these engineers either ignore you or sound an alarm when they see you. It depends on whether you've been shooting up other members of their union local.



Bachrodai is one of the more unique mutants to confront you in the game. Bats are his friend. Attack him and you'll have them to contend with as well.

SinTech Employees

Although not really adversaries per se, the engineers, lab technicians, and dark technicians (who do the genetic research) work for Elixis. If you shoot them, they will sound an alarm. Sometimes, if you're in a restricted area and they see you, that'll be enough for them to sound an alarm. Then you can kill them.

Mutants

These poor creatures are the end results of Elixis' forays into genetic engineering. No two are alike, and they come in many flavors—all nasty. A particular mutant may be a specific opponent, or just hanging out catching flies. The noncombatants won't bother you unless you get too near or mess with them. Also figure on running across accidental mutations that may have been caused by toxic or radioactive leaks. One mutant shark we saw looked incredibly mean.

but they just don't work for deathmatching," Selinske says. "They're not open enough, and the biggest problem is weapons. You don't need all the single-player weapons of mass destruction in deathmatching, so we've had to eliminate weapons or put restrictions on them in the DM maps. Any weapon a player picks up will be balanced in a fight. You're not going to see one guy with a rocket launcher control the game."

When Sin ships, shooters will have the opportunity to play as Blade, Elixis, or the sidekick in multiplayer matches. Selinske says there will be no weapons unique to any character—whatever weapons are available can be used by any character. As they run around wreaking havoc, players will discover Sin's deathmatch levels are totally nonlinear, with no discernible path to follow. The curious can check out DM1 on the Scourge disc for examples of this map philosophy. Expect support for Capture the Flag, weapons respawn options, and other player-encouraged tweaking to be revealed later.

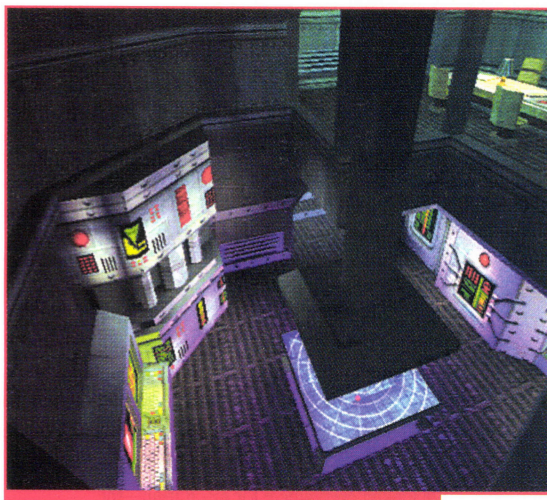
"We have a lot of ideas we're working on and not talking about yet because we realize not all of them are going to work," Selinske says.

CODE

"Quake was not designed for interactivity, so we had to change it," Dochtermann says.

Don't get him wrong: Dochtermann believes the Quake engine is the best 3D engine in the world, but to deliver that interactivity as well as richer colors and graphic detail, Ritual's programmers have had to graft on a Sin engine of their own.

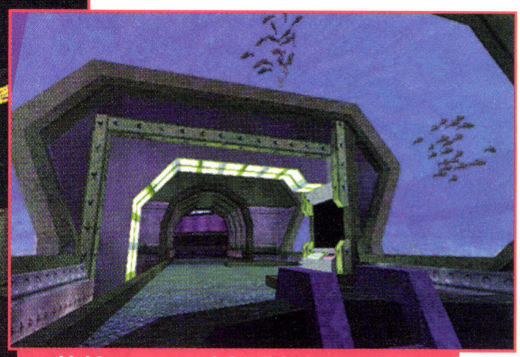
After getting deep into Quake C for Scourge, Dochtermann says one of the first things he realized was that Sin would need 16-bit color, which Quake doesn't support. There was no other way to get the full and bright colors, colored lighting, and high-end 3D effects. Also on the wish list was better translucency and transparency effects that could be realized in SVGA as well as in 3D.



See that colored light on the square panel? It'll show up in SVGA resolutions, too.



You'd better be packing a lot of armor if you meet a Dark Captain up close.



Light sources and detail features will be much better in Sin's 16-bit color.

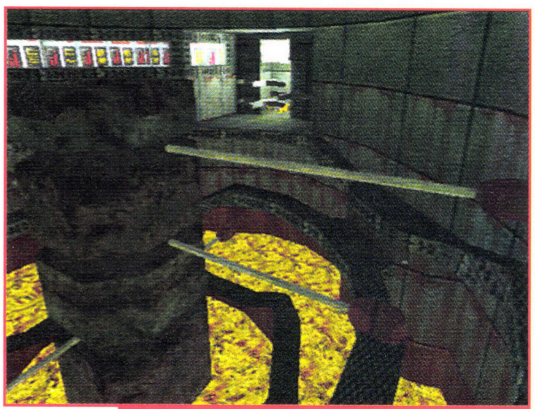
As the Ritual programmers started making changes to the Quake engine to add interactivity, enable 16-bit color, and add control enhancements such as crouching, they soon discovered they would have to make some radical changes.

"Quake C was great, and helped to teach a lot of people how to program, but if you want to build complex events into a game, doing it in Quake C eats up a tremendous amount of time," Dochtermann says. "So we got rid of Quake C. We considered going with Java, but it's not fast enough, so we decided to go with DLLs."

Implementing DLLs also made it possible for the programmers to create a simple set of scripted events to control movement, play sounds, and check the status of objects in the game. These scripts could now be used to initiate any event in Sin and, because they were already coded, they increase flexibility while cutting down the number of hours necessary to design level maps.

"After all the hours we spent working on Scourge ironing out cumbersome areas in the code, I wanted to make life easier for level designers," Selinske says. "Way too much time was spent on Scourge as the artists came up with concepts, level designers went about implementing those concepts, and the programmers took over to code everything."

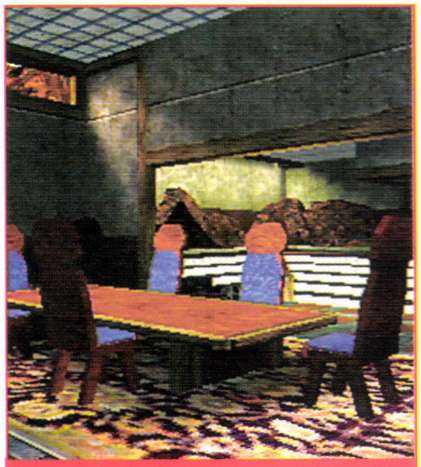
The scripts are powerful enough to allow level designers to add a base level of AI to their maps. The designers can now insert a Dark Captain into a map and implement scripts for walking and jumping—in effect, creating an animated sequence. The Sin engine (running on top of the original Quake engine) then assumes movement speed and relative placement of the



Getting from the bottom of this level to the top platform will be painful.

character without a programmer having to individually code the sequence. This default behavior can be left as is, or programmers can always add a more complex AI sequence later. The scripts will also be adapted into an editor so that gamers can create their own maps after Sin is released.

"Now we don't have labor-intensive Quake C work to set up simple animated sequences like walking up and down a corridor," Selinske says. "Nor do we have the same intensive designer/artist/programmer interaction. The script-based animations determine AI, and artists and designers don't have to wait on programmers to code before they see whether a level works."



SinTech Facilities are as lavish as they are sinister.

Besides taking less time to create levels, the scripted events also make it possible to add realism to characters that players encounter. Where a grunt manning a perimeter station in Quake stands in a stationary position waiting to be shot, a technician in Sin will be going about his job—checking panels, walking to another station and back again. The same goes for mutants: Don't be surprised if you run into little mucus-dripping mutant dudes swinging up in the rafters, or snipers moving from spot to spot to get a better angle on your back.

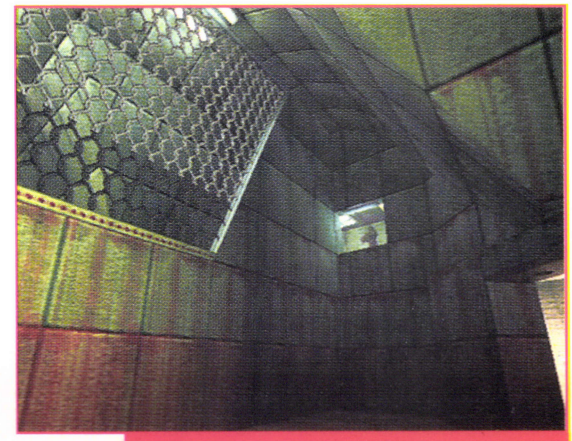
Dochtermann says standardizing on 16-bit color also gives the Sin designers the ability to add much greater detail to what you'll see in the game, so expect textures to have a richer, more realistic appearance. Light sources can now be colored, and the levels with colored lighting that Ritual's shown so far look amazing. The best Easter egg of all is that this can all be seen in SVGA without a 3D accelerator—all thanks to 16-bit color.

"We actually believe that Sin will be impressive enough in SVGA that those people who haven't already bought a 3D card will now have no excuse for buying one," Dochtermann says.

This doesn't mean Ritual isn't thinking 3D in a big way, though.

While the company isn't embracing Direct3D and D3D cards (Dochtermann says he has no plans to support D3D), Sin will work with OpenGL. (Direct Sound and DirectX are supported for Win 95 compatibility, however.) "There really isn't a need to support D3D," Dochtermann says. "Most serious cards have GL drivers these days."

For those gamers who stay with SVGA, Dochtermann says 16-bit color costs a 10- to 15-percent speed hit. Thus, while Scourge could be played on a P100, don't use anything less than a P150 to run Sin—unless, of course, you have a 3D accelerator.



One of Elixis' guards is watching you from every corner.

END GAME

As 1997 comes to a close, Ritual plans to release Sin by early next year. Ritual is a young company, and everyone working there recognizes how much rides on the game's success. Miller is already contemplating taking the new development tools and expertise honed on Sin to other in-house projects; but for now, Dochtermann most clearly echoes the thoughts of the Ritual creative team.

"We fully realize there are a ton of Quake-based games out there now, and more of them are coming. That's why we feel we have to make Sin stand out enough to dominate in its class," he says.

From what *PC Games* has seen of Sin—admittedly very early in the development process—Dochtermann and the Ritual team have an excellent chance of making good on that pledge. ■

Work on fleshing out villainess Elixis Sinclair began early in the development process.



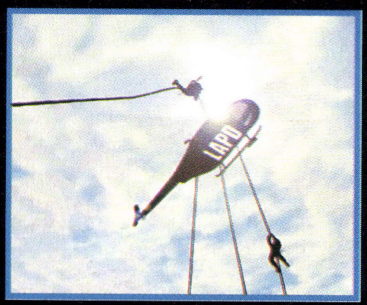
IF GUNS FAIL, BRING IN DOGS.

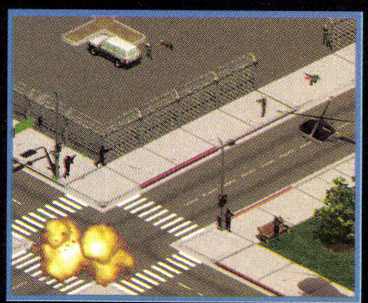
IF DOGS FAIL, BRING IN TEAR GAS.

IF TEAR GAS FAILS,

BRING IN HELICOPTERS.







SIERRA®

Download the demo at www.sierra.com/swat2.

©1997 Sierra On-line, Inc.® and/or ™ designated trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-line, Inc., Bellevue, Wa 98007. All rights reserved.

DARYL F. GATES'
POLICE QUEST
SWAT 2

Welcome to the world of Daryl F. Gates and the LAPD. Here, a thin blue line separates law-abiding society from kooks, crazies, terrorists, sociopaths, drug lords and gang bangers. The choice is yours. Join the good guys and learn LAPD SWAT tactics, strategies and scenarios. Or become one of society's miscreants, and take it to the establishment with bombs, grenades, and rocket launchers. Alone or on-line, no two missions are alike. All you have is your mental wherewithal and a steely resolve to keep your drawers soil-free under fire. It's not just another day in L.A. Then again, it is.

RATING PENDING
RP
ESRB

IF HELICOPTERS FAIL,

BRING IN THE NEGOTIATION TEAM.





RETURN OF THE BFG

With Quake 2, id Software goes back to its roots in what promises to be the sequel of the year—and perhaps id's greatest game ever.

By Steve Klett

As more and more details creep out about Quake 2, it's become increasingly clear that id's alleged transformation from a game company to a tech company—a rumor that spread like wildfire through the industry with the departure of John Romero—couldn't be further from the truth.

No, the boys at id are working harder than ever on the sequel of sequels—perhaps because in the back of their minds, they think they have something to prove with all the turnover and upheaval that's hit the small developer over the last year. id's strong showing at the Electronic Entertainment Expo surprised not only the press but id's competition as well, indicating that the company is perhaps in much better shape than people thought. id certainly thinks so.

"id's in the best shape it's ever been," says Barrett Alexander, director of business development. "We're a game company that's making its best game ever—and there's no more dead weight to hold us back."

While it's obvious there are still some ruffled feathers in regard to some of id's recent staff departures, it's equally obvious that they haven't affected id's focus on not only making great gaming technology, but great games too.

id invited *PC Games* down to Texas to get a hands-on look at Quake 2, and our arrival couldn't have been better timed: id had just completed a new code merge (the process of melding programming from John Carmack, John Cash, et al., and testing the additions), so we saw—and played—the freshest game code available. The AI, level population, performance optimization, and bug fixing were all still far from complete; however, all the levels were in place and all the building blocks in order.

For once, id is really focused on a ship date—shipping "when it's done" has changed to "it will make Christmas." And there was no reason we saw to believe that id won't deliver Quake 2 in time to be under your Christmas tree.



This game's emphasis is definitely on combat—targets will never be hard to find.

Old, Familiar Ways

In many ways—and id's quick to admit it—the company is going back to its roots with Quake 2. Specifically, that means it resembles Doom in many respects.

"Quake 2 is a very different game" from Quake, says game designer Tim Willits. "We all felt the need to go back to Doom—that is, make you feel like you're a superhero, and give you a consistent universe and a futuristic setting."

What this means is Quake 2, like Doom, will have a story (it's such a short, simple one we won't go into it here; if you want to read it, visit our Web site at **www.pcgames.com**—just don't expect *War and Peace*) and a set of clear missions and objectives within the game. There won't be a set of episodes that are different from each other, with an intermingling of medieval and modern monsters, as Quake had.

Quake 2's layout is constructed like a 3D version of the map in Doom that showed your progress as you moved from location to location. That is, you'll be able to look out of windows and such throughout the course of the game and see areas you've been or need to get to.

"We want very much to give players a sense of identity and location like in Doom. And there's only one time period, so all the monsters look like they're in the same family," says Willits.





You know that metal bikini armor can't be comfortable. (left) Your basic weapon is the blaster.

The Specifics

There will be eight units in the game, which are small groups of levels designed to resemble chapters more than episodes, Willits says. Each unit is made up of multiple levels (there'll be 30 single-player levels, with a still-to-be-determined number of deathmatch-only and Capture-The-Flag levels). You'll be able to move back and forth between the levels in a unit, but once you leave a unit, you're gone for good. Also, the simple "find the exit key" gameplay is gone. Your entrance from one level into another may be as simple as taking an elevator and stepping out—or dropping into a hole you blast in the floor. You also have limited choices as to which levels to visit first in a unit, and you can make decisions that make your progress easier or harder—setting off alarms, flooding levels, and so on.

Even the monsters appear similar to Doom's—only they're 3D, of course, and much more impressive (and frightening) to behold. For instance, like the Archvile in Doom, the Medic in Quake 2 will run around and heal any monsters you don't finish off. And don't let the name fool you: Like the Archvile, the Medic is no wuss. All the baddies will have twice the amount of animation (not to mention polygons—there are 200 polys in the female monster's posterior alone), which allows them to move more smoothly and realistically. Each creature will also have two distinct pain and death animations.

There will be lots more secret areas to find in Quake 2—many that require you to manipulate the environment in some way, or to make clever use of the new crouch key ('bout time, id!). Gone, however, is the Use key—used to open and close doors and hit switches—which id had been planning on bringing back.

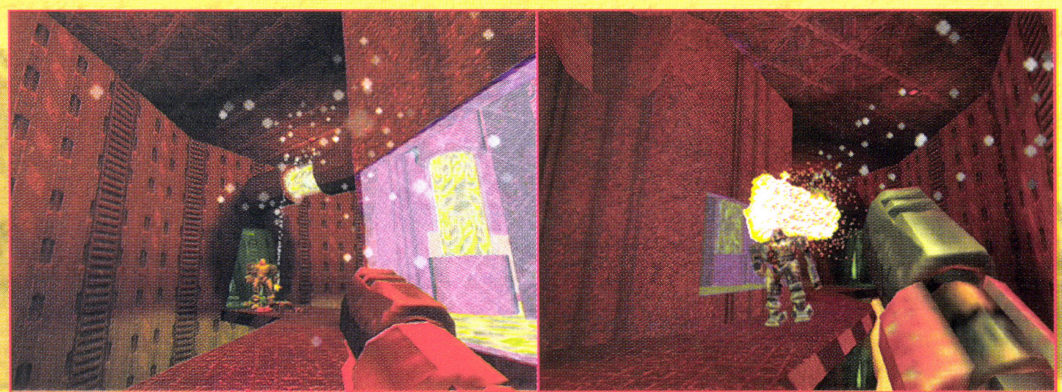
"With the addition of the crouch key, we felt we really needed to keep the gameplay simple, so we took out the Use key," says Willits. "Our games are all about the combat experience, and everything in the game is designed to enhance that—we want you to go into a room with guns blazing and not be fumbling with controls."

id's also adding lots of little touches aimed at making you feel more immersed in the game. For example, weapons will no longer be floating around in the air in the middle of a hallway for no apparent reason. (Didn't you wonder who dropped all those guns for you in Quake? And who *is* that Quake guy, anyway?). Instead, you'll find weapons, ammo, and powerups on the bodies of dead marines, dropped by monsters you kill, or hidden in secret areas.

Also, as in Valve's upcoming Half-Life—a game, by the way, that nearly every id guy made complimentary mention of while we were there—you'll see in-game demos of recorded actors doing stuff. For instance, you'll come across other Space Marines fighting and dying, and you'll hear radio chatter from your mates throughout the game. Unfortunately, you won't be able to interact with any of these characters, and your character doesn't speak.

"That's just not what we do," says Willits. "We don't want to do anything that may take away from the full-on combat experience."

You will, however, have a gender choice to make early in the game: you'll be able to play as a female or male Space Marine, and that goes for multiplay as well. In



The colored lighting will blow you away. Note the particle trail the grenade launcher leaves when fired.



Too bad you left your fly rod back at the house...

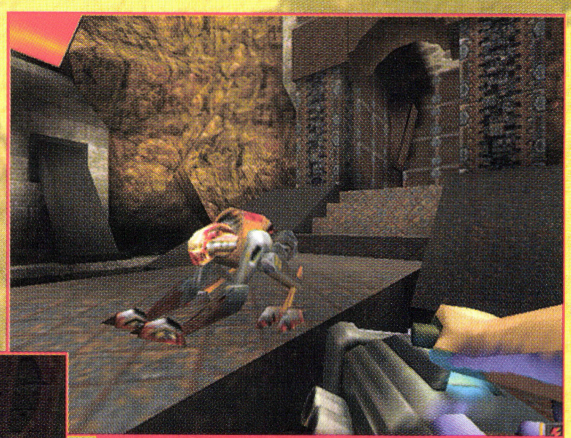


The water will have a rippled effect, and it'll be translucent most of the time (occasionally it's polluted).

the spirit of fair play, you'll find the above-mentioned female monster to fight (with Lara Croft proportions, of course; see our screenshot). id's also added arms and hands to the weapons to aid in the suspension of disbelief. And the weapons switch is back: as in Doom, it'll take time to change weapons, which will necessitate more prudent decision-making in deathmatches.

Guns Galore

Quake 2's weapons themselves are very Doom-like, and they're consistent with what you'd expect a Space Marine to be carrying. The Wolfenstein 3D gatling gun is back (we simply couldn't get enough of this one while we were there—running into a room full of baddies and mowing 'em all down was simply too much fun). There's a blaster, a high-speed blaster, a machine gun that kicks up when you fire, a rocket launcher that looks like a rocket launcher, a grenade launcher, a railgun, a disintegrator, hand grenades, and mines. Best of all, the BFG is back! id hadn't decided yet on the exact destructive power of the Quake 2 BFG yet, but it will be in the game. Oh, yeah: There's also a personal nuke that you can set off with a delayed fuse...just make sure to get the hell out of the way.



Damn, that disintegrator is heavy!



Flies buzz around some of the monsters' corpses. Did you remember to pack the repellent?

What—no melee weapon? That's right. id's decided to take the fisticuffs out, and there's no hammer, ax, or blade either. Why? "There's no melee attack because we think it blows," Willits says. (That's a slight bummer in our opinion, since there's no way to humiliate an opponent in a DM by axing him and then seeing that "Snipe was ax-murdered by The Player" message blazing across the screen.)

Some cool gadgets to find include a silencer, which you can use to take out guards when stealth is the best route, and force shields that you can use to block enemy fire. And yes, the Quad, Megahealth, and Pentagram of Protection power-ups are still there.

id didn't have a lot to say about multiplay while we were there, because the network code wasn't in place yet. "John [Carmack] didn't want it enabled yet so we would all get some work done," Willits says, only half-jokingly.

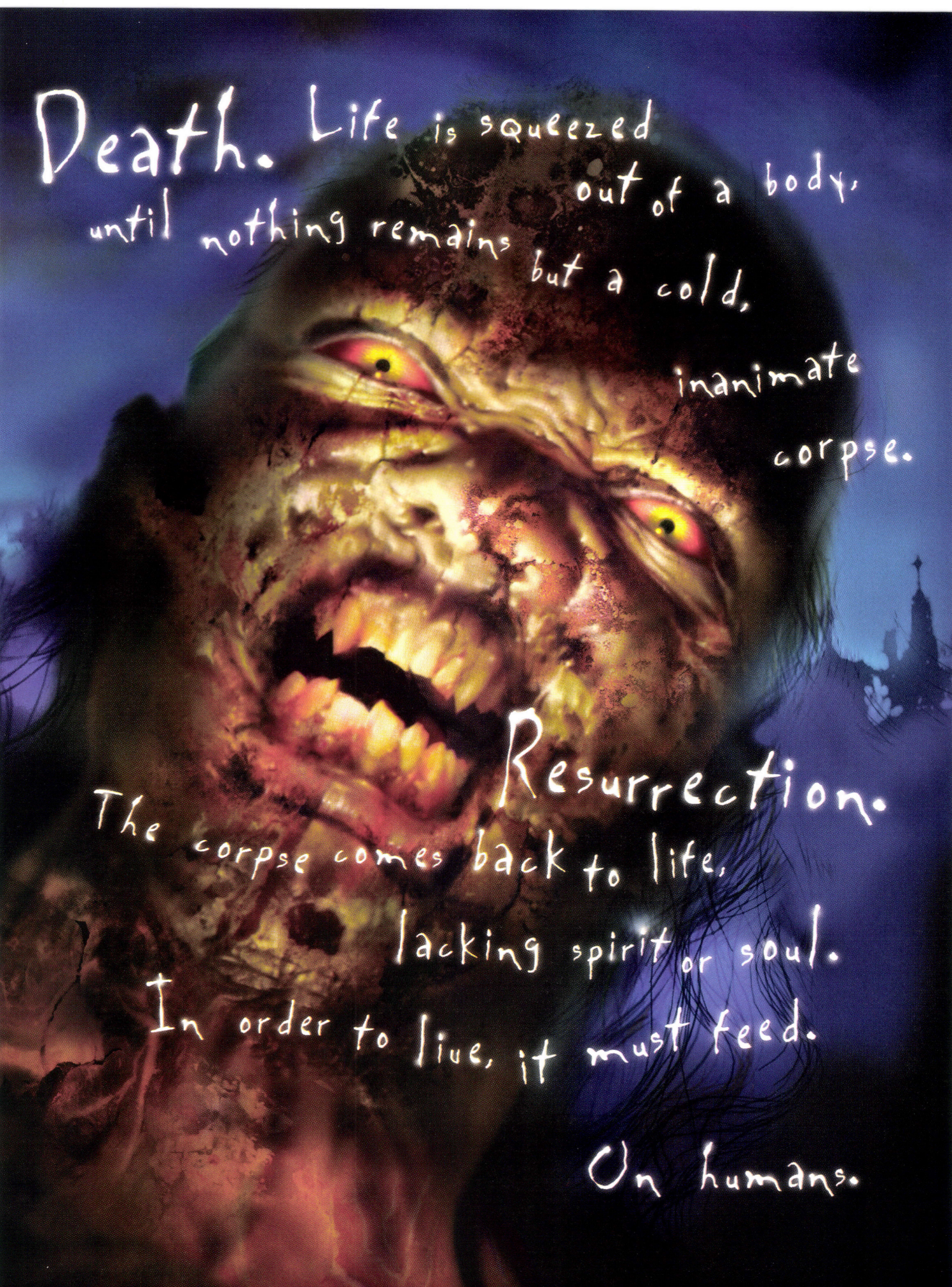
However, all you Capture-The-Flag fans will be stoked to learn that Quake CTF inventor Zoid (in real life, Dave Kirsch) is building the CTF elements for Quake 2. CTF, and multiplay in general, will also be enhanced by the addition of gun turrets that you can control, as in Shadow Warrior. While the multiplayer games are optimized for up to 32 players—twice the number Quake supports—id claims the theoretical limit is as many as 200; we'll have to wait and see on that one.

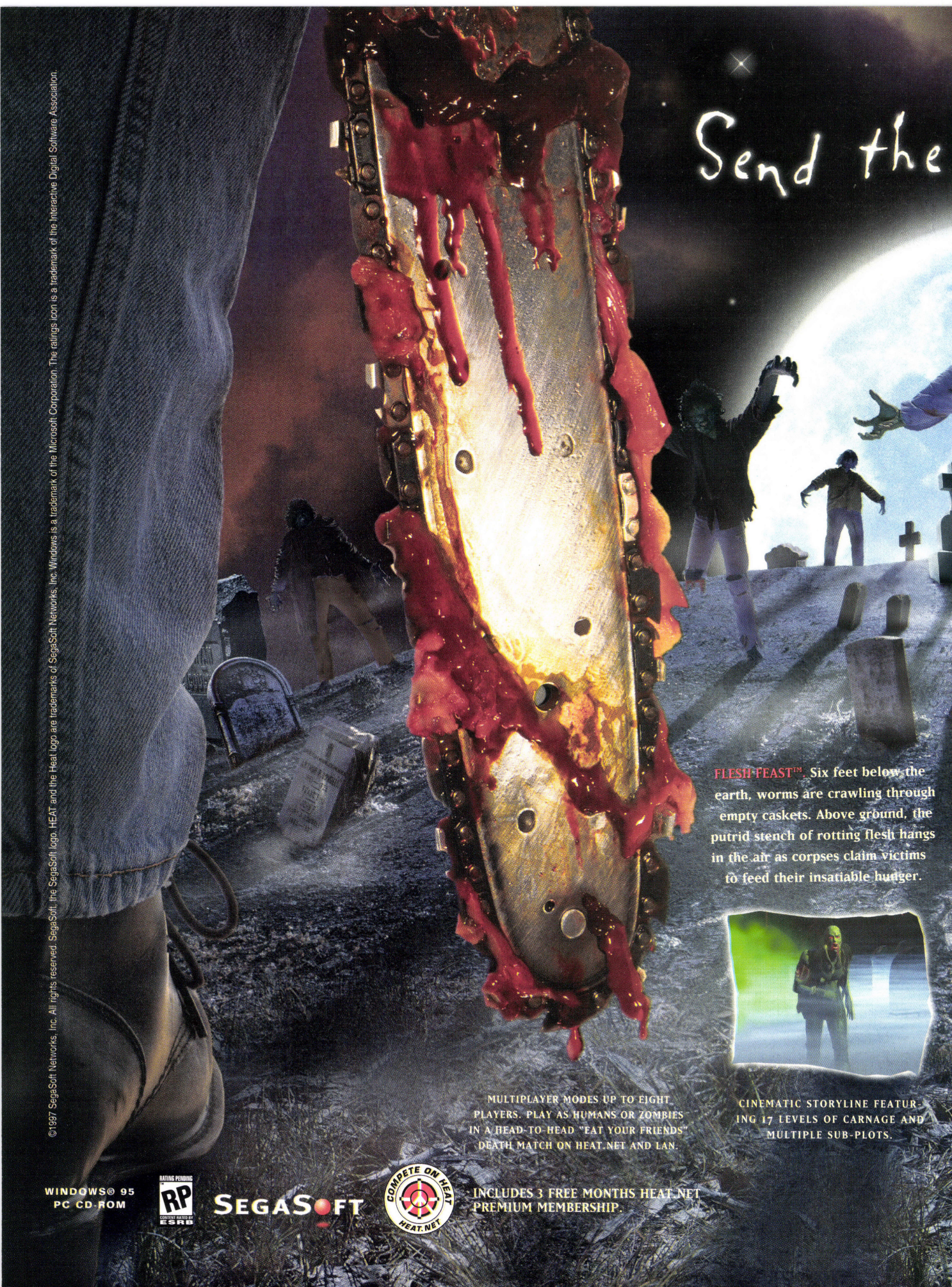
Some of the monsters in the single-player game become surrounded by flies when they're killed, and id is considering making this happen to anyone who camps (i.e., stays in one area too long) in multiplay. Not only will this be embarrassing for offenders, but it'll also give audio cues as to their location to the rest of the players.

So, we feel we can concede the loss of the melee attack and Use key when you consider all the cool new features going into Quake 2. While this sequel is going back to Doom, it's clearly far and above the evolution between Doom and Doom II. And we can't wait for the fragging to begin anew. ■



SEE MORE ONLINE
http://www.pcgames.com


Death. Life is squeezed out of a body, until nothing remains but a cold, inanimate corpse.
Resurrection.
The corpse comes back to life, lacking spirit or soul.
In order to live, it must feed.
On humans.



©1997 SegaSoft Networks, Inc. All rights reserved. SegaSoft, the SegaSoft logo, HEAT and the HEat logo are trademarks of SegaSoft Networks, Inc. Windows is a trademark of the Microsoft Corporation. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

dead to their graves. Again.

The dead have mysteriously come back to life, and Nasat Island has gone from premier tourist destination to nightmarish human hunting ground, where nobody is safe.

Survive the island's many terror-filled sectors using weapons and wit to eliminate wave after wave of ravenous undead hordes. Rescue the remaining survivors and strategize your escape.

Then, in the climactic finale, penetrate the complex that houses the secrets to the dead's resurrection. FLESH FEAST. IF YOU'RE ONLY CONSUMED BY FEAR, YOU'RE ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES.





FIGHT OFF THE FLESH-HUNGRY HORDES AS YOU STRATEGICALLY CONTROL FOUR DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.

OVER 50 DIFFERENT WEAPONS AND DOZENS OF GRUESOME DEATH-TRAPS.



Now we'll see what you're made of.

FREE DEMO: 1-888-SEGASOFT OR www.fleshfeast.com

COMING SOON.

Call of the New Worlds

Hot graphics plus fresh ideas times an eager universe of role-players can only equal one thing: the resurgence of the online RPG. There are more cool ways to play and more great characters to become than ever. Consider the alternatives—all of 'em...

By Barry Brenesal

MUDs. MUSHes. Immersive Environments. Persistent Universes. Massively Multiplayer Worlds. Whatever you call them, they're a wave breaking on computer gaming with a force more surprising than anything since you blew up your first asteroid or jumped one of the Mario brothers over that first hurdle.

For those of you who've been addicted to the board games and text adventures of past years, these online creatures are the RPGs you've always dreamed of. They combine the human intelligence of pencil-and-paper D&D sessions among friends with the number-crunching, backgrounds, and dungeon-mastering of the best standalone computer games. Role-playing games have always thrived in social, interactive situations no matter what form the games took; now they've taken the form best suited to them. And that doesn't exclude text-based play—promising text-adventures are on the drawing boards, too.

There's no single reason that it's all coming together now. Many improvements to CPU speed, asynchronous communications, 3D video cards, more standardized programming by third-party developers under Windows 95, the spread of the Internet, the financial success of online providers—all these and more have united to produce an abrupt surge in a gaming genre that had lately come to be a minor niche. The level of anticipation that's built up around the beta testing of Ultima Online (see "Creating Worlds," July/August) has also contributed to an increased awareness of online RPGs in general.

Game developers, prominent and otherwise, are responding, placing major resources into the race toward multiplayer alternate realities. What follows here is a selection of the most interesting products in development, whether behind the scenes or already online and still growing—immersive multiplayer environments that are guaranteed to excite you with some combination of attractive graphics, intriguing ideas, and exciting combat and/or role-playing opportunities.

Strap on your broadswords and grab your walking staffs, gamers. This preview won't be a rough journey, but that can't be said of the many wild, imaginative lands that will greet you on your arrival.

Asheron's Call
Release date: First half of '98
Developer: Microsoft
URL: www.microsoft.com

In this pseudo-medieval multiplayer RPG, status is power, and information vies with gold as the main currency. If 10 players discover the gestures, ingredients, and words that create a new spell, it'll be more powerful than if 50 people learn it. Knowledge, and the ability to hoard it, forms the basis for much of the social interaction in Asheron's Call.



Asheron's Call, Microsoft's entry into the online-RPG wars, lets you download richly textured environments on the fly.



Information may not always be enough in Asheron's Call; sooner or later, you're going to have to do battle.

Players with access to greater information, abilities, and combat support can "recruit" lower-level players. The former offer protection and other personalized benefits; the latter lose a percentage of their subsequent experience to their Lord or Lady in all events until that allegiance is severed. The most important player-characters in the game will be able to influence Council votes on major issues such as war and merchant supplies.

Initial 3D screens of Asheron's Call are impressive. Its developers promise that the advanced dungeon system will load swiftly—a four-level dungeon with 100 rooms requires only 7KB of storage space. Texture upgrades occur slowly and on the fly, so that players who are traveling swiftly through an area don't have to wait for the full visual effects to load.

With 16 classes, plenty of unique monsters (olthoi, gromnies, aquatic fae), an open-ended learning system of 30-plus skills, and tens of thousands of objects, Asheron's Call looks like one many fantasy RPGers will be answering.

The Awakening (working title)
Release date: In beta testing late 1997; full release in '98
Developer: Robert Olsen
URL: www.mindspring.com/~dtcomput/awaken/default.html

This RPG has eight basic races and six classes, but it also lets you design a class out of all skills that strike your fancy—similar to the methods employed in Daggerfall's character-creation system. As in Daggerfall, wealthy players will be able to design their own armor, weapons, and spells. You'll be able to construct a house or castle and own stores. Extensive real-world economic modeling will influence in-game prices.

Many NPCs in The Awakening will possess sophisticated AI and a high level of self-awareness. They will have their own likes and hates, and the more powerful among them will argue, form alliances, and go to war.

There will be no bitmapped graphics; The Awakening features a 3D-modeled environment similar to that of the Quake engine. Developer Robert Olsen also plans to provide support for hardware-accelerated video cards.

Core Confederation
Release date: Closed beta in six months to a year; releasing in 1999
Developer: OmegaTech Software
URL: www.netsync.net/users/jecobb/core/enter.html

The Confederacy is a collection of 2,300 individual space-faring species. Five megagovernments operate within the Confederacy—establishing their own policies—and sometimes go to war with one another. Players choose to become one of these species, operating in the sphere of a particular megagovernment.

The level of design execution in this elaborate outer-space multiplayer RPG is reminiscent of Ultima Online. There will be thousands of production components to choose from for colonies, stations, computers, ship building, and so on. Asteroid and planetary mining will be possible, and different species will maintain separate colonies on the same planet.

Expect a lot of role-playing in Core Confederation, as well as combat and social interaction. Player organizations/cartels will be actively encouraged. Ships will be able to employ public and private passworded channels—but there's also in-game technology that allows players to "hack" into private communications for spying and information-gathering.

Core Confederation aims to present a sophisticated, self-sustaining economic model, including a user-playable stock market that features player-run companies. In addition, players will have a programming language similar to Mac Hypercard at their disposal, allowing them to create scripts controlling complex ship maneuvers, repetitive tasks, reporting abilities, and other functions while they're offline.

Crossroads
Release date: Late '98
Developer: VR1 Studios
URL: www.vr1.com

Fresh from its development of Fighter Ace for Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone, VR-1 is readying a host of online-only titles with role-play elements. Oddly enough, the most intriguing one is a throwback to the text-based MUDs of yore.

The Crossroads of the title refers to a nexus of energy that permits players to cross between two worlds. One is much like an *X-Files* version of our own, while the other permits you to wield vast mental forces and magical powers.

Crossroads is text-based, with an interface that resembles Zork and other great Infocom games. However, current plans include the addition of multilayered sound effects that will shift in volume, content, and direction according to many factors in any given room (e.g., time of day, activities, and how many players there are).

RPG fans will delight in Crossroads' extensive character-generation facilities, which are more personalized than in any other online multiplayer game to date. There are 40 classes in all, each given a special set of objectives, advantages and disadvantages, and friends and enemies. You can join a rogue fraternity of espionage and counterintelligence experts, or become a member of a brutal, reptilian race of aliens out to conquer Earth.

There are roughly 80 abilities based initially on profession, governing everything from combat to communications. Further character customization

is offered through 200-plus traits that can affect gameplay in a variety of obvious and subtle ways. What if you get killed by a member of a rival organization? Find a friend with the ability to resurrect you; or, if you wish, play a ghost. Yes, in Crossroads, that's a separate class. It would seem that insubstantiality can be fun.

DragonRealms
Release date: Already available
Developer: Simutronics
URL: www.simutronics.com

This text-based fantasy RPG offers its players level-based and skill-based experience, with eight classes and nearly 100 skills to draw from. DragonRealms is noteworthy for its highly distinctive professions, each of which is virtually an in-depth subset of the game in itself. Empaths (healers) literally can't fight, so the element of combat is missing for them, while traders lead caravans, accept contracts, and haggle over commodities.

Combat-oriented players needn't despair: DragonRealms is one of the very few online games to offer an engagement system, allowing players and monsters to advance on and retreat from their opponents.

Many new hunting areas, a new province (complete with aquatic monsters), more spells, and a number of special events are planned for the near future.

Ethereal
Release date: First quarter '98
Developer: Cybernations
URL: www.cybernations.com/ethereal

This multiplayer universe has an intriguing premise: transform users into your associate builders/programmers. A toolkit will accompany the game, letting you act as dungeon master for your own personalized section of the modular environment, which includes areas, spells, and objects. Characters will literally walk from one player's URL to another, with adjoining "world fragments" cached in your system for quick retrieval; as you enter a new segment, that area is added to your cache on the fly. The server simply feeds you the information you need.

What if a user has created a player-killing dungeon, or an area that rewards players with outrageously generous items and coins? Cybernations' staff has an answer to this basic play-balance question. They'll consider all submitted user materials; those that are approved will be slotted into Ethereal, while those that aren't become "dreamworlds," where people can travel without affecting the game's main environment once they return to it.



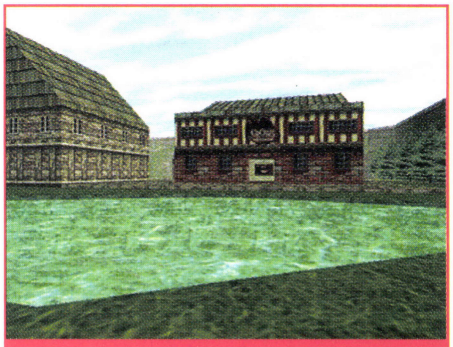
Battle in Everquest is timed so that you won't experience lag-based problems.

Cybernations currently has a bulletin board and avatar-based chat room for discussions between company programmers and alpha testers at its Web site.

Everquest
Release date: 1998
Developer: Sony Interactive
URL: www.everquest.com

It's the graphics that'll grab your attention first in Everquest—and hold it. The game's towns, dungeons, and countrysides employ 16-bit color, dynamic lighting, and a broad swath of textures to bring the land of Norrath to life. Nor will it necessarily look the same the second time through, thanks to changing weather patterns that include fog and rain.

Everquest offers you 12 different races, 40-plus skills, and 14 classes built along traditional lines (healers, wizards, thieves, and so on). Various races and classes will start in different towns, with six to twelve cities (and 23 hunting areas) expected to be live by the time the universe opens. There will be plenty of shops for weaponry and sundry items, with both official and player-generated guilds.



Sixteen-bit color should make Everquest's environments enchanting.

Combat in Norrath avoids the latency problem of many online games by employing a battle timer that incorporates speed and item encumbrance. Once combat begins, the timer tracks and maintains the appropriately measured number of hit attempts by you and your opponent. It waits to process attacks when one connection lags behind another. The overall effect may end up seeming slightly choppy, but the payoff is real battle—rather than you waiting for your lag to catch up, only to find that you've taken eight sword blows in the meantime.

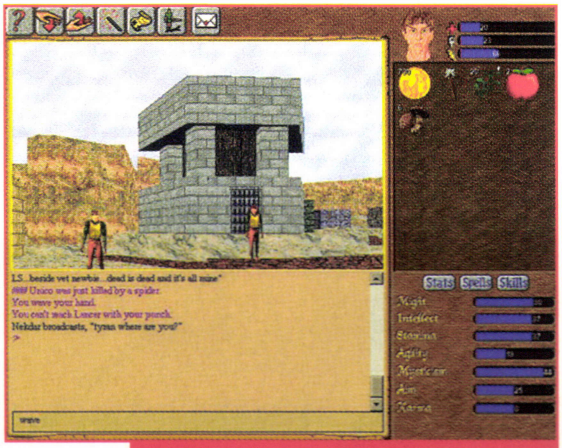
Everquest's magic system is component-based. Many spells will be learned from scroll fragments and incorporated into a caster's spellbook. Everquest also incorporates Necromancers into its class system—unusual for such medieval fantasy environments. Ever wanted to bring dead monsters back to life and have them fight for you? Role-players, here's your chance.

Furcadia
Release date: In open beta, no release date set
Developer: Dr. Cat
URL: www.realtime.net/furcadia

Ultima VI includes a charming coastal hamlet named Paws. There's an Inn there, and in the Inn stands its proprietor, Dr. Cat. Cat was actually a programmer/writer on Ultima VI, as was 'Manda Dee; both subsequently left Origin Systems and began work on their own online multiplayer environment. Furcadia is the result.

Of all the games under consideration here, Furcadia comes closest to a classic social MUSH (Multi-User Shared Hallucination). It lacks combat, concentrating exclusively on role-playing, building, and conversation. Players assume one of four anthropomorphized "animal" races (cat, horse, skunk, or dog), select a variety of colors for skin and clothing, and venture forth into a world which, not surprisingly, bears an astonishing (and comely) physical resemblance to the later Ultima games.

Furcadia also provides its users with a "Dream Editor" that supports the design and building of very simple, open structures in the environment. Plans are under way to construct an in-game bulletin board and an email service.



Expect new adventures and performance gaming in the next Meridian 59 release.

GemStone
Release date: Already available
Developer: Simutronics
URL: www.simutronics.com

Simutronics' flagship product is a text-based game set in the world of Elanthia. Advancement is experience- (and largely combat-) based, providing player characters with the opportunity to train further in an important variety of skills. There are hundreds of class-based spells in the game, as well as many extensive towns, secret societies, and player-run houses.

Given its emphasis on monster combat, GemStone offers a wide variety of creatures at all levels, many of them with sophisticated AI and complex effects. As with all Simutronics games, the gamemasters make a point of frequently staging real-time events that supply fresh gaming challenges: invasions, special quests, scavenger hunts, and so on.

Like its sister RPGs, DragonRealms and Modus Operandi, GemStone began on Genie, became extremely popular on AOL, and subsequently moved to the new Simutronics Web site after AOL's recent overhaul of its game offerings. All three games are still available on Genie and Prodigy, however.

GemStone is expected to add further areas, new monsters, and ranged combat in the near future.

Meridian 59
Release date: Currently available
Developer: 3DO
URL: www.meridian.3do.com/meridian

A nice balance of combat, role-playing, and socializing makes up the Meridian 59 universe. There's a fairly strong element of PvP (player vs. player), but there are also many areas where your greatest obstacle is battling monsters, or figuring out the answers to quests.



Dancing sprites.

Meridian 59 furnishes thousands of powerful artifacts, weaponry, and spells to stock up your inventory and knowledge base. The gamemasters have been diligent in challenging players with new areas, such as the recent Vale of Sorrow addition. While colors and textures are dated in the primary game, an expansion set called The Revelation—slated for fall 1997 release—will pump up the overall world size by 50 percent and offer newer, more visually attractive challenges.

Modus Operandi
Release date: Already available
Developer: Simutronics
URL: www.simutronics.com

There's no historical or futuristic venue here for a change: Modus is set in modern times on Morada, a tropical resort island. Players take the roles of various detective classes (such as secret agents and morticians) who solve mysteries, kill escaped criminals, and investigate the many curious features of the landscape. The writing is pellucid, perhaps the best of any online game.

Future plans for Modus Operandi include a new major mystery, an abandoned jungle temple, and a perilously complex series of lava caves.

Nomads of Klanth
Release date: Mid-'98
Developer: VR1
URL: www.vr1.com

What if members of four races—Elves, Dwarves, Humans, and the Undead—found themselves in a post-Apocalyptic, *Mad Max*–style world? They'd build battlewagons to harvest fuel and ore and craft weapons to destroy their enemies, right?

Such is the premise behind Nomads. You battle across a series of unfolding, uneven, and thoroughly differentiated 3D terrains pitted with obstacles, water, and lava. Strategy plays at least as important a role, however, as you size up your opponent's capabilities and the effects of your surroundings.

Each of the four races has a unique story background, with built-in advantages and disadvantages that dramatically affect gameplay. For instance, Undead harvesters have extremely powerful weapons, but they chew up the magical ore, witchstone, at a phenomenally fast rate. Visually, VR1 has provided battlewagon interiors that are distinctive (dig the attractive bejeweled controls for the Elves, and the leg-of-a-corpse stick-shift for the Undead) and simple to operate.



Fear and loathing in the desert typifies Nomads of Klanth.

Hercules and Xena
Release date: Mid- to late '98
Developer: Simutronics
URL: www.simutronics.com



As Mel Brooks said in *Spaceballs,* "Moichandizing!" Television shows have mutated into "spinoff factories" for a host of related products—everything from jeans to pool toys to steroid-enhanced drinking cups you can buy at your local fast-and-fatty foods emporium. All the way to—yes, that's right—an online multiplayer game. With a basic theme licensed from Universal Studios' popular television shows, this "role-playing lite" text-based multiplayer game will have an emphasis on combat.

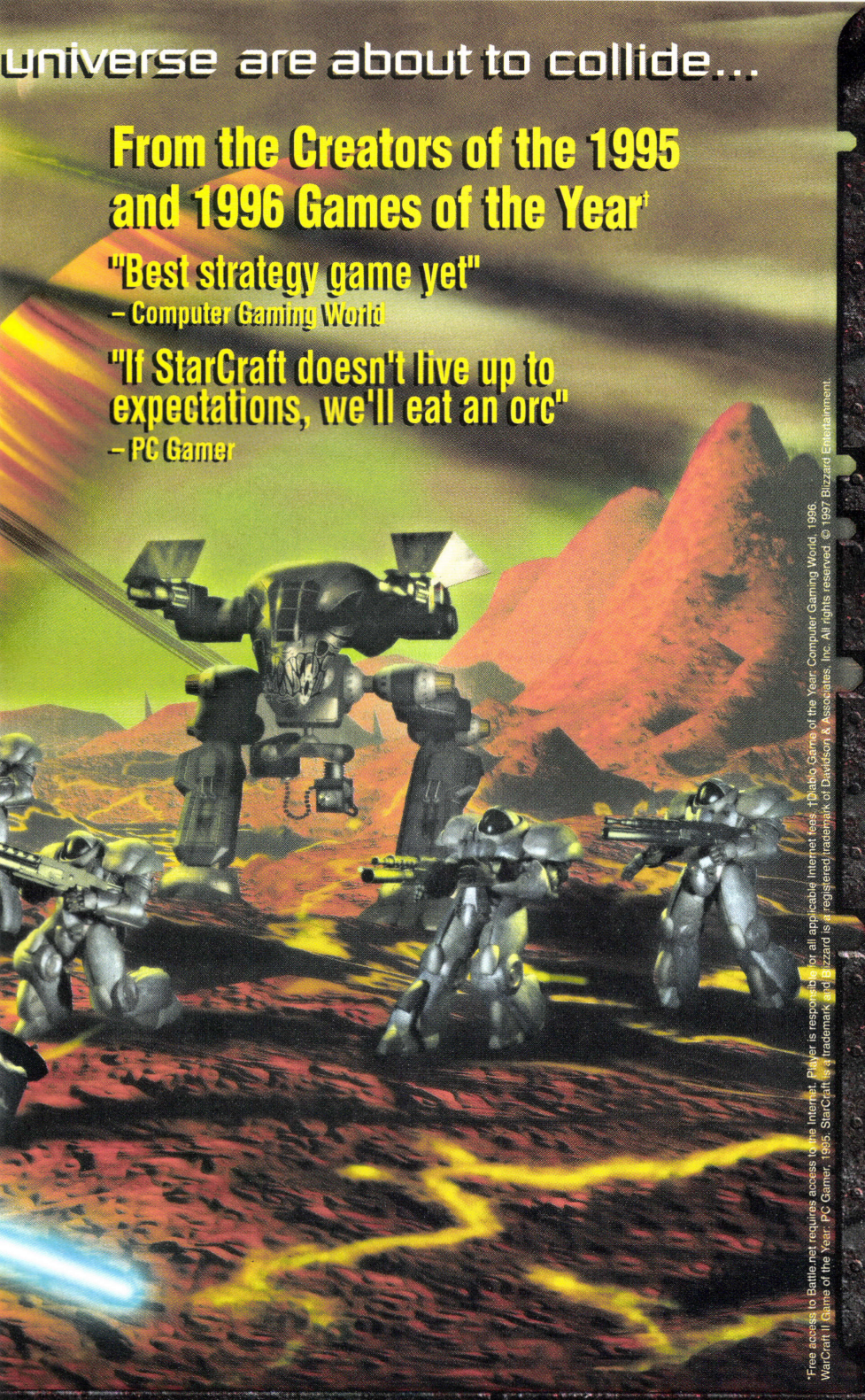

3 of the most powerful forces in the

universe are about to collide...

From the Creators of the 1995 and 1996 Games of the Year†

"Best strategy game yet"
– Computer Gaming World

"If StarCraft doesn't live up to expectations, we'll eat an orc"
– PC Gamer



Free* Internet Competition
Battle alone or challenge up to 8 players with one-click, free access to Battle.net. Enhanced Internet features include: worldwide player rankings, tournaments and player handicapping

3 Alien Races
Command any of 3 alien races – each boasting a unique set of skills and abilities

3 Theaters of Battle
A deadly mix of space combat, planetary assault and covert base infiltration

3 Epic Chapters
3 separate storylines intertwine within 30 scenarios to tell the epic saga of a universe on the brink of destruction

Spectacular Special Effects
Real-time light-sourcing, environmental effects, and interactive terrain are only the beginning

Campaign Editor
Create full campaigns from custom designed scenarios. Define victory conditions, record voices and much, much more...



*Free access to Battle.net requires access to the Internet. Player is responsible for all applicable Internet fees. †Diablo Game of the Year, Computer Gaming World, 1996. WarCraft II Game of the Year, PC Gamer, 1995. StarCraft is a trademark and Blizzard is a registered trademark of Davidson & Associates, Inc. All rights reserved. © 1997 Blizzard Entertainment.

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

www.blizzard.com
1-800-953-SNOW

STARCRAFT™

There are five city types on Klanth—one for each of the races—and a set of neutral towns. Clicking on any of the buildings in the 2D background transports you into the message board, a live chat room, a mercenary mission board, an auction room, a tavern (for gambling, possibly multiplayer), and an area where you can buy and sell weapons, armor, and fuel.



A Klanth armored vehicle.

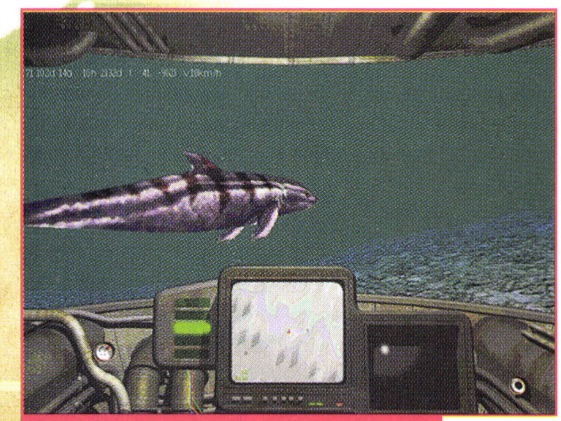
The S.A.R.A.C. Project
Release date: Summer/Fall '98; open beta in early '98
Developer: VR1 Studios
URL: www.vr1.com

The S.A.R.A.C. Project is set deep within the hostile oceans of an aquatic moon, circling a distant planet that's home to a few underseas human colonies. Each player takes the role of a S.A.R.A.C. (Sub Aquatic Reconnaissance & Acquisition Craft) pilot, a semi-autonomous explorer out to make it big in an environment teeming with competition.

You start by choosing a professional affiliation with one of the COMSET (Colonial Municipal Settlement) divisions, equivalent to manufacturing guilds. These include MechSys, Power, Mining, Bioculture, O2, and Salvage/Rescue. You'll get lower prices and better deals for that guild specialty when you enter any colony.

How you set about amassing your fortune from this point on is entirely up to you. There are corporate contracts, alien sea creatures to capture, seafloor mineral prospecting, and underwater piracy at your disposal. The ocean environments are varied and provide attractive multisource lighting effects, particularly as you watch a torpedo speed toward its intended target.

After acquiring a nice bankroll, you can invest in building your own underwater-colony cooperative. Players can reproduce their own guilds and set their own prices. Stiff your enemies! Reward your friends! The S.A.R.A.C. Project offers a compelling combination of real-time combat, role-playing, socialization, and trade.



Twenty-thousand leagues under the sea in your S.A.R.A.C.



An angel flies the Friendly Skies.



Skies requires you to get used to air travel.

Skies
Release date: Second half of '98
Developer: SegaSoft
URL: www.segasoft.com

To quote the game's developer: "Everybody is stuck in a sci-fi or medieval rut. Ours is an all-new mythos." In Skies, you choose from one of several airborne races (dragons, gargoyles, demons, angels, sprites, or dark angels), explore a series of islands in a distant universe, and gather experience from missions.

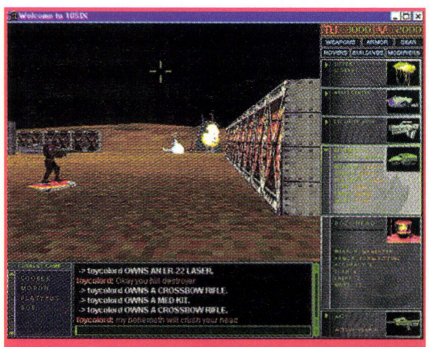
As your character matures, it visibly ages and gains more slots to carry LEDOs—uniquely ownable plug-ins devised for SegaSoft's HEAT network. They are the ultimate in object-oriented gaming: items that can function (depending upon their creator's intentions) as spells, buildings, weapons, artifacts, even player-characters themselves. And on HEAT, you can trade, buy, and sell (for in-game or real-world money) LEDOs with other players.

In Skies, LEDOs are usually relics with powerful spells that can be stored on a character's relic bar to increase power and statistics. Newly hatched dragons start with four relic-bar spaces, increasing with age to hold 10. Some relics will be race- or alignment-limited, or both.

Complex missions (there are dozens of basic mission types and hundreds of missions available at any given time) will require a mix of races for completion. SegaSoft sees missions themselves as part of a greater, overarching game theme: a battle in Skies between good and evil. Missions can modify your alignment, giving players considerable flexibility over time to develop detailed role-playing characters.

10-6
Release date: First quarter '98
Developer: SegaSoft
URL: www.segasoft.com

A rogue planetoid enters the solar system sometime in the future and establishes an erratic but stable orbit. Since it's loaded with valuable mineral resources and evidently devoid of life, Earth's governments agree to split it up into 1 million highly expensive plots of land. Four major, competing Terran corporations try in turn to convince individuals to become corporate serfs and stake out a plot.



10-6: Fun, times a million.

You play one of those serfs. You can choose among dozens of different manufacturing facilities to add to your plot, mining and consuming the ore Transium; but given geographical limitations, you can't build it all. You'll have to join with others to handle resources more efficiently. 10-6's developers describe it as "a sense of community with paranoia."



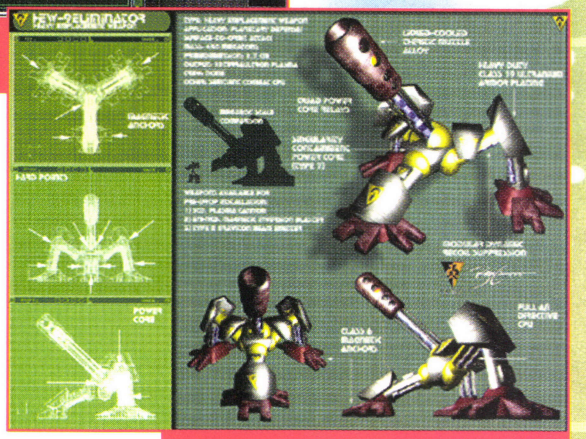
You've seen these Ultracorps guys before, right?



Your defenses need to be up constantly in 10-6.

but with luck and cunning you'll soon have the rest of the galaxy begging for mercy on its various alien appendages.

More than other VR1 games, Ultracorps is heavy into resource-management. You supervise purchases, factory production, colonization, and invasion forces. Your planet's race, starting population, mineral content, and proximity to other occupied worlds (neutral or human-controlled) varies, affecting everything else.



Choose your Ultracorps weapon.

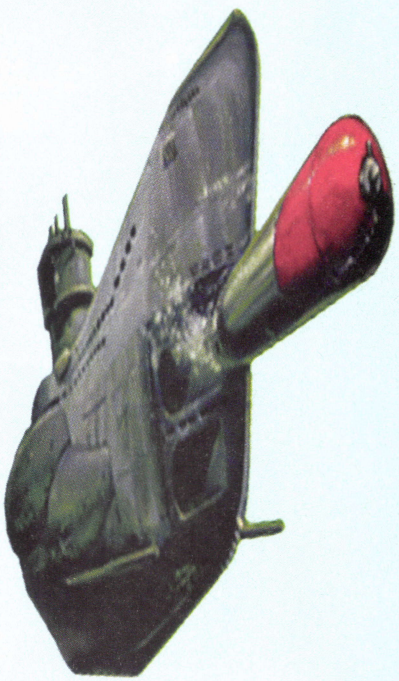
Your region can be attacked any time, even when you're offline, but the massive energy required to attack—and the loss of vital equipment should an attack fail—weights the game toward defense. New players will also be protected by special Corporate Guard Bots for two weeks. 10-6 employs HEAT's LEDO system, so you can buy, sell, and trade weapons, armor, and buildings with other players. There will be central corporate offices that offer trading posts, research facilities, pawnshops, medical centers, message boards, and mission-recruitment areas.

Fortunately, a huge wealth of galactic information is at your disposal in the online "Magna Acutronica." You can read up on the various races, fleets, reproducible technologies, designs available for purchase, planetary data, combat strategies, and events headlines. There's also access to a chat room, a bulletin board, and an Ultracorps email service, which allows you to taunt, stymie, boast, threaten, compliment, and gloat at individuals or groups of adversaries. It's all part of the fun of multiplayer online gaming—and now, finally, it's really, truly here. ■

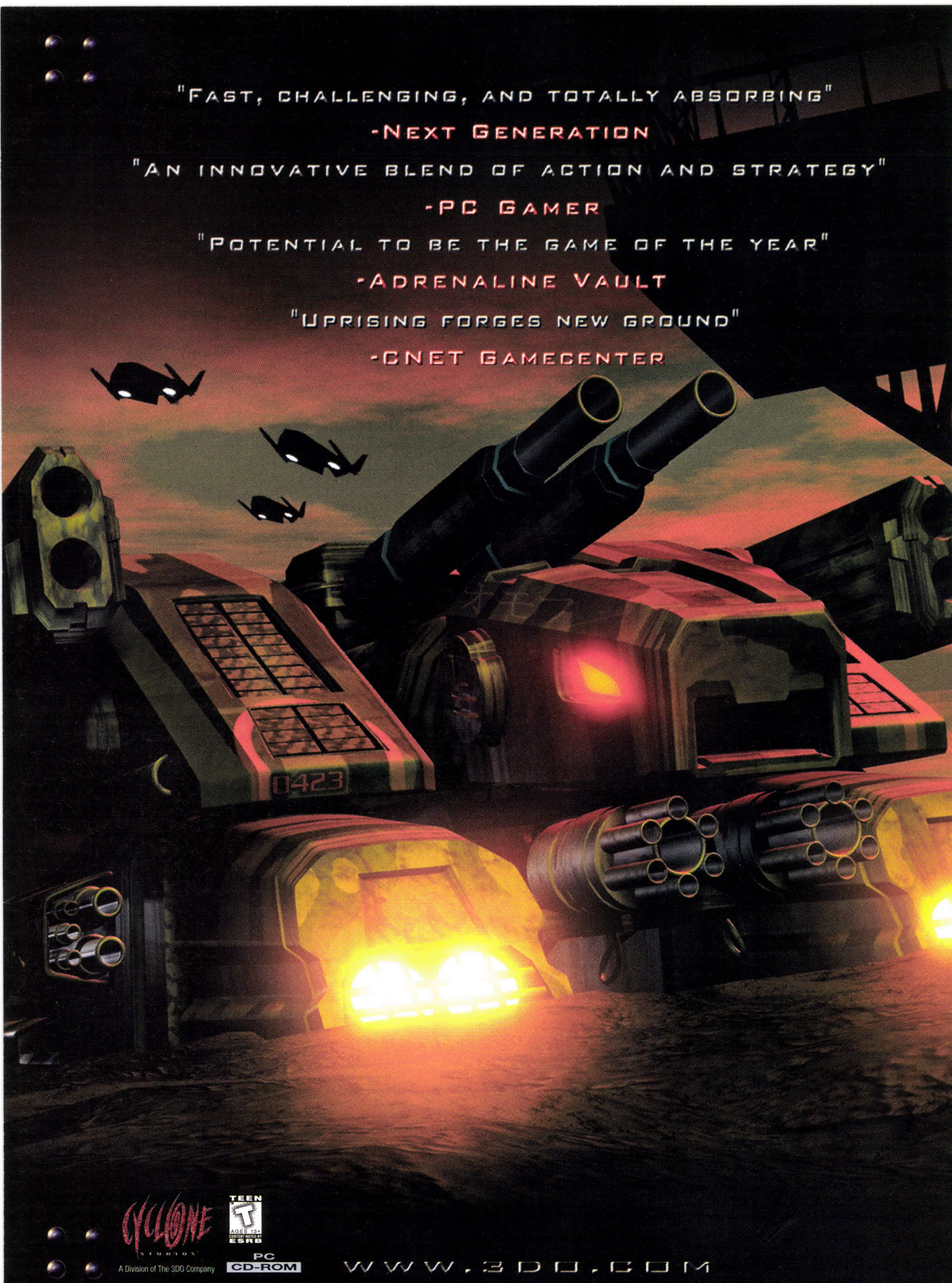
Ultracorps
Release date: Beta testing now, release in early '98
Developer: VR1 Studios
URL: www.vr1.com

This turn-based strategy game (all player commands are processed simultaneously at 4 a.m.) is a blend of ruthless galactic conquest and role-playing. You begin as overlord to a single planet,

WWW
UBOAT
.COM
/PCG



PLAY
IRON WOLVES
MASSIVELY
MULTIPLAYER
GAME


"Fast, challenging, and totally absorbing"
-Next Generation
"An innovative blend of action and strategy"
-PC Gamer
"Potential to be the game of the year"
-Adrenaline Vault
"Uprising forges new ground"
-CNET Gamecenter
0423
Cyclone Studios
A Division of The 3DO Company
TEEN
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PC
CD-ROM
www.3do.com

JOIN OR DIE.



[STUNNING 3-D GRAPHICS]



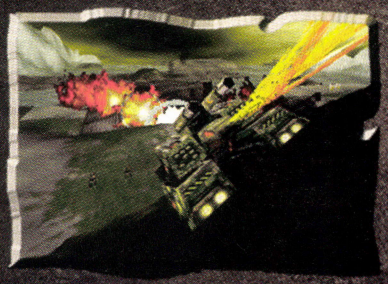
[INTENSE MULTIPLAYER]



[MASS-SCALE DESTRUCTION]



[STRATEGIC DEPTH]



[HEART-POUNDING ACTION]



[COMMAND ENTIRE ARMIES]

UPRISING™

FUTURE. WAR. IMMERSION.

Uprising, 3DO, Cyclone Studios, and the 3DO and Cyclone Studios logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of The 3DO Company. All other trademarks and/or registered trademarks are properties of their respective owners. ©1997 The 3DO Company. All rights reserved.

Got Blood™? Get Bloodier.

And win a trip to Monolith Headquarters in Seattle, or other great "Blood"-y prizes*.







Blood™ Plasma Pak:

The only expansion pak made by Monolith Productions, creators of BLOOD™

7 new maniacal monsters including Zealots, Fire Chrysallids and a new boss, The Beast!

3 powerful new weapon modes including Akimbo Tesla Cannons and the Sphere of Incineration for the Napalm Launcher!

11 all-new bloodcurdling levels including **2** sadistic new Multiplayer Bloodbath levels!

BLOOD™

PLASMA PAK

requires the full version of BLOOD™

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

www.lith.com

CD-ROM

Distributed by GT Interactive Software

www.gtgames.com

www.gtinteractive.com

*** RULES:**

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Open to US residents over 18 years of age at time of entry. Void where prohibited by law. For entry information and official rules, visit GT's web site at http://www.gtgames.com/blood rules or send a SASE to GTIS 10 E. 40 St NY, NY 10016 Attn: Blood Sweeps. Residents of WA and VT may omit postage. Game ends November 30, 1997. Blood™ Plasma Pak ©1997 Monolith Productions, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created by Monolith Productions, Inc. Published and distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. This game uses the Build engine and tools by Ken Silverman. GT™ is a trademark and the GT logo® is a registered trademark of GT Interactive Software Corp. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.



DARK EARTH

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW—

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT AN EPIC ADVENTURE THREE YEARS IN THE MAKING

By Daniel Morris

Nicolas Gaume hands me two CDs and says, "Here's three years of my life."

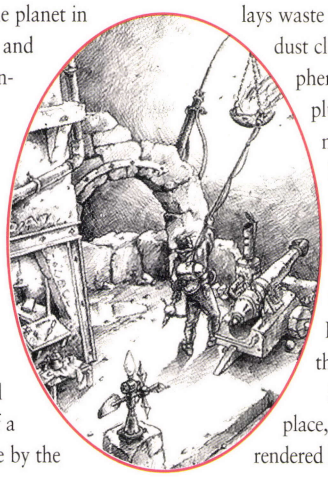
He's being facetious in his nonchalance, but there's a very real anxiety on his face. Gaume is very boyish-looking, seeming even younger than his 26 years, but he's been the president of his own software company since he was 19. After spending a few years under the Mindscape Bordeaux banner, Gaume bought back his company, Kalisto Entertainment, and set out to make the game of his dreams.

Dark Earth is a direct descendant of its creator's lifelong love of epic fantasy stories, beginning, almost inevitably, with J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. "Tolkien made a world that was completely immersive," Gaume says with open fondness. "Even after you were done with it, all its details were still with you."

Gaume and his development team in Bordeaux, France, have assembled their new fantasy-adventure with a staggering scale of involvement and background, seeking to bring an epic measure to Gaume's vision of high adventure in a captivating world.

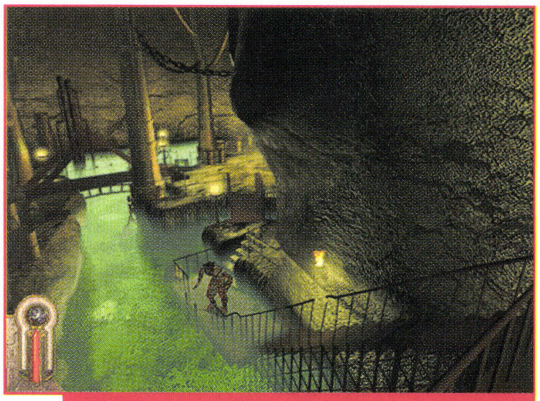
A Bleak Future

Dark Earth is set in a future ravaged by a mysterious cataclysm that's left the planet in a state of perpetual twilight and cold. As thick dust clouds encircle the globe, only a few shafts of sunlight remain, and in these enclaves man has established the Stallites—vertical cities where order and civilization make their last stand against the surrounding darkness.



The reason for the global catastrophe is a near-miss of a killer comet that passes close by the Earth in 2054, sprinkling the planet with a devastating rain of fragments. The disaster lays waste to civilization and kicks up dust clouds that blanket the atmosphere, blotting out the sun and plunging the world into a dark new Stone Age. As the player begins the game, the only explanation for the devastation comes in the form of legends handed down by the revered Sunseers of the city of Sparta. Bit by bit, however, you uncover the truth.

Sparta, where the game takes place, is a masterwork of Gothic artistry, rendered in astonishing neomedieval style.



Better be willing to get your toes wet, because some areas require underwater exploration...

Dark Earth's graphics engine incorporates a pre-rendered hi-res background and then inserts the 3D-generated characters into the scene. It works together beautifully. Detail is the key: 3D-generated objects (scurrying rats, flickering torches, doors blowing in the wind) convince the eye to accept the screen image as a fully realized and immersive environment.

The game's camera completes the masterful illusion by employing movie-style angles to heighten the dramatic tension of an encounter or the brooding anticipation of a solitary trip into a dark, unexplored new environment. The result is grand opera, one of the most engrossing PC gaming experiences in a long time.



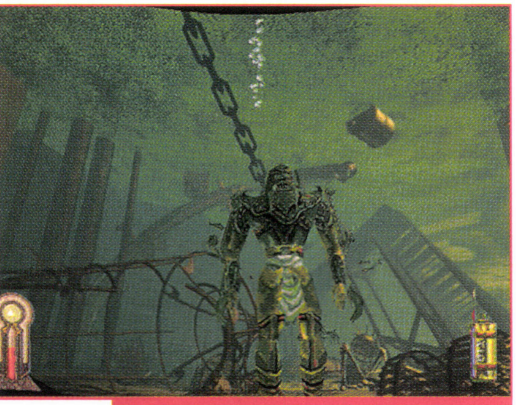
This assassin wants you dead.

Guardian of Fire

You play Arkhan, a member of Sparta's order-enforcing Guardians of Fire. At the start of the game, you are merely a young guardian eager to prove his mettle. You begin play (Gaume estimates that careful players will easily spend 80 hours on their adventure) getting acquainted with Sparta and participating in training bouts with other members of the guard, including your



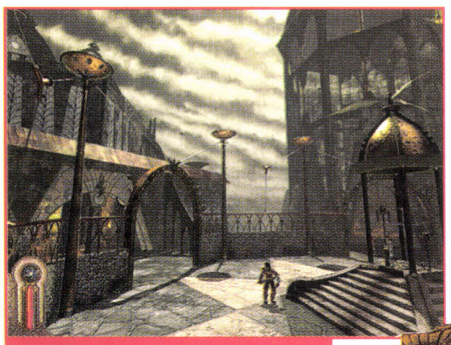
Mess with the bull, you get the bullets.



...which in turn requires scuba gear.

immediate superior, Zed. You will also meet the Sunseers, the caretakers of the sun-based religion (the sun is worshipped, quite understandably, as a god in this twilight future); you're sworn to protect their lives at all costs.

The action gets underway when an assassin—a minion of dark forces that have infiltrated Sparta—murders a Sunseer and infects you with a strange virus that begins immediately to transform you into a menacingly decaying beast-figure.



Sparta is a big, lonely place to be infected and alone.

Suddenly, it's a race against the clock to find a cure before the virus claims you.

Arkhan's rapid deterioration into a "shadow" beast leaves him on his own; within a short time, you're wanted by your old buds in the Guardians of Fire. You can make alliances with key Guardians, but it's more or less you against the world after the virus has set in. Your early training will have to suffice. It's no longer about promotion, it's about survival.

What's so different and fascinating about Dark Earth is the level of background that it offers—details that actually appear in gameplay, are relevant to your adventure, and subtly provide you with an absorbing experience beyond the simple mechanics of questing and combat. The characters are fully fleshed out, and your conversations with them are necessary parts of a large and evolving interweaving story.

Gameplay proceeds in either light or shadow mode, and you can shift freely between them. Each offers unique advantages and disadvantages. In light mode, Arkhan conducts himself very politely, calmly, and carefully. He steps lightly and is very diplomatic in his dealings with people; this gets him into the good graces of strangers more easily and allows him to notice some of the subtler clues that can be missed in shadow mode.

But shadow mode is just so exciting. In this darker tone, Arkhan basically behaves like a big jerk. He's gruff and demanding, and not afraid to burn bridges. He storms through each room, heedless of such subtleties as owners and locks. The benefits of this approach are the ability to muscle info out of impressionable people and an advantage in preparing for potential ambushes in unexplored areas.

Combat is very intuitive, not to mention a whole lot of fun. Your weapons range from simple swords to flails to full-on firearms. The fighting is in the mold of Time Commando, with a wonderful range of action and control. Once you're infected with the virus, you can employ a special attack move that inflicts serious damage on an enemy, but at the cost of accelerating the contamination—and watching that red contamination meter crawl upward to the dying point is an awfully nerve-wracking experience.

While the combat mode is detailed and very enjoyable, Kalisto has included the option to toggle combat mode off, giving adventure-oriented gamers the opportunity to let the computer re-

THE CHARACTERS

Dark Earth is populated by a rich array of characters. Among them:



ARKHAN

The hero of Dark Earth is a young Guardian of Fire put to the test when he's exposed to a deadly morphing-virus. Now, his race to save Sparta is mirrored by a race to save his own life.



PHEDORIA

A female member of the Guardians of Fire, Phedoria becomes Arkhan's ally.



ZED

Arkhan's superior officer, Zed is a powerful fighter and a very good person to have on your side.



RYLSADHAR

Arkhan's father is a Spartan mystic who becomes embroiled, along with his son, in the conspiracy to take over the city.



KONKALITES

The Konkalites are the sadistic assassins threatening order in Sparta. And they're pretty ugly, too.

solve their fighting for them. That frees them to concentrate on the exploration and problem-solving dimension of Dark Earth, which is what the game emphasizes anyway. The designers have taken great pains to craft an immersive world to explore, and the combat is always a sidelight to the drama of uncovering Sparta's history.

The expansive dialogue can be reviewed from a handy dialogue calendar that records every conversation you have in an easy-to-use review menu. No more scribbling obscure snippets into a notebook—every person you've met and word you've uttered is there to be re-examined.

Best of all, the shaping of the dialogue accommodates what has gone on in the game up to that point. If you've had to kill somebody that you probably should've bartered around, you may find yourself a wanted man at guard checkpoints. The reverse is also true: some prescient thing you've done out of politeness may find its way back to you in the form of recognition or a favor.

World Building

What makes Dark Earth so striking is the completeness and complexity of its game universe. Gaume and his team began building it with the desire to go beyond other games and create a full and rich environment, modeling the gameplay experience around it.



The Future of Dark Earth—Online and Beyond

Kalisto isn't done with Dark Earth yet. A Dark Earth II is tentatively in the wings, and the company hopes to debut Dark Earth Online late next year. Dark Earth Online is being planned as a massively multiplayer, persistent world set in the Dark Earth universe, and it's being designed from the ground up as an Internet experience rather than just a simple addition of multiplayer functions to the pre-existing game. Kalisto hopes to fully employ the depth of its game universe by offering the kind of RPG and adventure elements that an interactive online game can provide.

"The online environment can take advantage of the detail and social construction of the game," says Gaume. "When it's ready, you'll be able to be there."

No plans yet on what specific forms the game will take, or whether it will be in conjunction with an online service. —*DM*



Diplomacy is always an option when encountering a stranger...

And Dark Earth is quite a place.

As the impenetrable gloom of the dust clouds chokes the sunlight from much of the Earth's surface, the Stallites—the haven cities built skyward in the few remaining funnels of sacred sunlight—find themselves under constant siege from forces of darkness. An evil the Sunseers only whisper about has infiltrated Sparta, and it quickly becomes apparent that a high-ranking administrator of the city is in league with a band of murderous upstarts called the Konkalites.

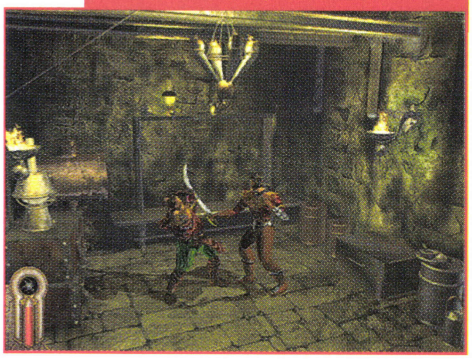
Sparta is among the best-imagined, best-realized settings of any computer game in recent memory. The grim, stone-hewn realness of the place is rendered in exacting detail, with each brick, tower, and scaffold a piece of a thoroughly baroque whole. Kalisto has worked minor miracles with light-sourcing to allow floods of light to illuminate vast dark chambers, shadows to be drawn on the fly by the light of flickering torches, and waves of light to bounce on the walls above water. Each shadow is meaningful and menacing.

There are 250 different locations to explore. Given that each can be visited under a vast number of circumstances—carefully, violently, at leisure, under duress, as a revered hero, as a wanted outlaw—the replayability of Dark Earth is very high. Each location offers new experiences, rewards, and punishments, depending on the course you've chosen.

That course is definitely yours to choose. While still more or less linear, Dark Earth provides you with an abundance of situations in which your choice opens up a new road that can completely alter the flavor and outcome of an encounter, and thus every subsequent encounter. You can kill anyone on any screen—just walk up to them and waste them. The game won't stop you. Arkhan walks around in a free movement path—nothing predirected or predetermined—and you may conduct yourself as you see fit.

Gaume's overarching motif, the struggle between the light and dark halves of human nature, plays itself out in this manner. Arkhan can do things constructively or destructively, or do things both ways in the same sequence; the choice is yours to make, in many subtle and more obvious decisions throughout the game. The game can be won either way; it's the play experience that changes.

...but when diplomacy fails, battle begins.



There's an awful lot to learn about Dark Earth and Sparta, but the amazing thing is that you aren't forced into learning any of it. Background is woven into the game at the spinal level, and it'll go unnoticed by gamers eager to jump into an adventure. The pleasures of the realized universe, however, are there for you to pick up and assimilate. The subtle hierarchies of Sparta's religious and political establishments aren't merely ham-handed

Real-time light sourcing creates and augments shadows on the fly, even in flickering torchlight.



THINK FOR YOURSELF, WHILE YOU STILL CAN...

Both DVD and CD-Rom versions available

TEX MURPHY

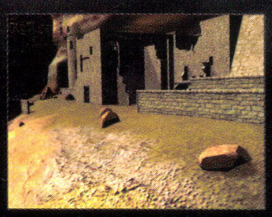
Overseer

NOVEMBER 1997

An elite group of scientists have been assembled to create a dark secret. Now each of these men are marked for death...and the monster they have created will put the dreams and desires of all men under the domination of one lord and master...

The adventure game for the 21st century

- Award-winning, high color 3D Virtual World puts you into the 21st century
- Fantastic graphics, great puzzles and AC-3 5-channel sound
- Two levels of play with on-line help

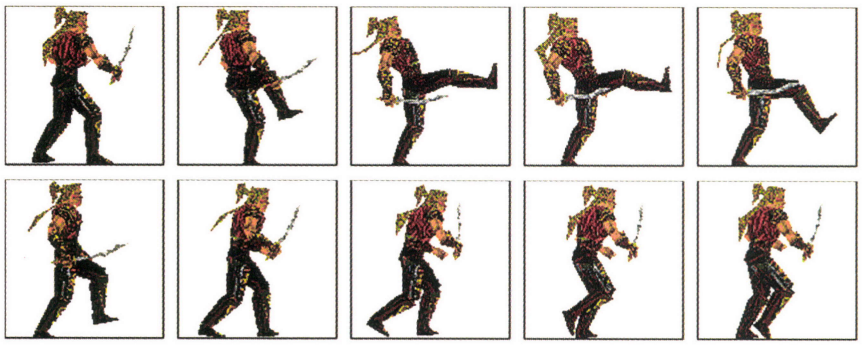




Actual game screen shots

(800)800-4880 • FAX (801)359-2968 WEBSITE—http://www.AccessSoftware.com

ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED



Animating each character in 3D: these steps comprise one simple kicking animation for basic hand-to-hand combat.

cinematic lectures: they're fully functional, and become apparent in an insinuating manner through conversation after conversation, battle after battle.

Arkhan gets a full mind-and-body workout. Some foes can only be beaten with force, like the hydra guarding a creek that must be blasted. Others can only be outwitted, such as the craftsman who challenges you to a board game requiring quick logic to outmaneuver him. Figuring out which is which as situations change is completely up to you.

Serious Fun

Leafing through Gaume's design documents is a laborious experience. His notes include detailed specs on the flora and fauna, the creatures that roam the outer darkness outside the Stallites, and the treacherous nature of Sparta politics. All of it is in evidence in Dark Earth, but never as mere window dressing. It's all encrusted under the foundation of Arkhan's adventure. You never feel like you're tripping over Kalisto's three years of work—you're simply unraveling it.

It's safe—and refreshing—to say that Dark Earth is a product of passionate belief. The depth of Kalisto's dedication is evident from the time and energy it's put into realizing this vision in a number of different mediums: the computer game is augmented by a paper role-playing game (Gaume bought an RPG firm to facilitate a faithful iteration), a novel, and a prospective film or series. The cinema's influence on Dark Earth is obvious, as it unfolds with the visual sweep and flair of a Terry Gilliam–style epic.

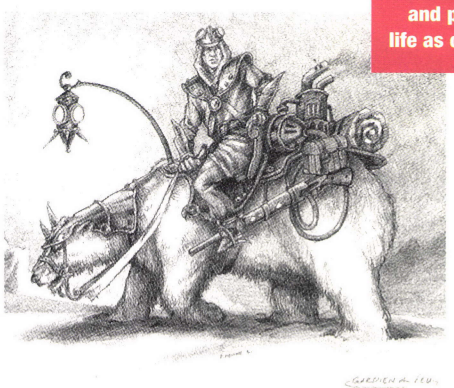
"It's the big stories that have always gotten me," Gaume says, his animated face recalling books and movies and games that form a canon of grand entertainment for him. "Stories that are bigger than other ones, that stay with you, that everyone knows and remembers..." He starts to grapple for a word.

"Legends?" I venture.

"Legends."

There you have it, then—Dark Earth is officially an aspiring legend. At the very least, it's a fantastic adventure game as rich and rewarding as any offered yet this year.

Each of the game's characters, creatures, and places began life as conceptual art.



PC Games reviewed a final version of Dark Earth provided by Kalisto Entertainment. At press time, the game had just been picked up by MicroProse for distribution in the US; it should be in store shelves in late October.

Umm, how many polygons did you say?



DARK EARTH

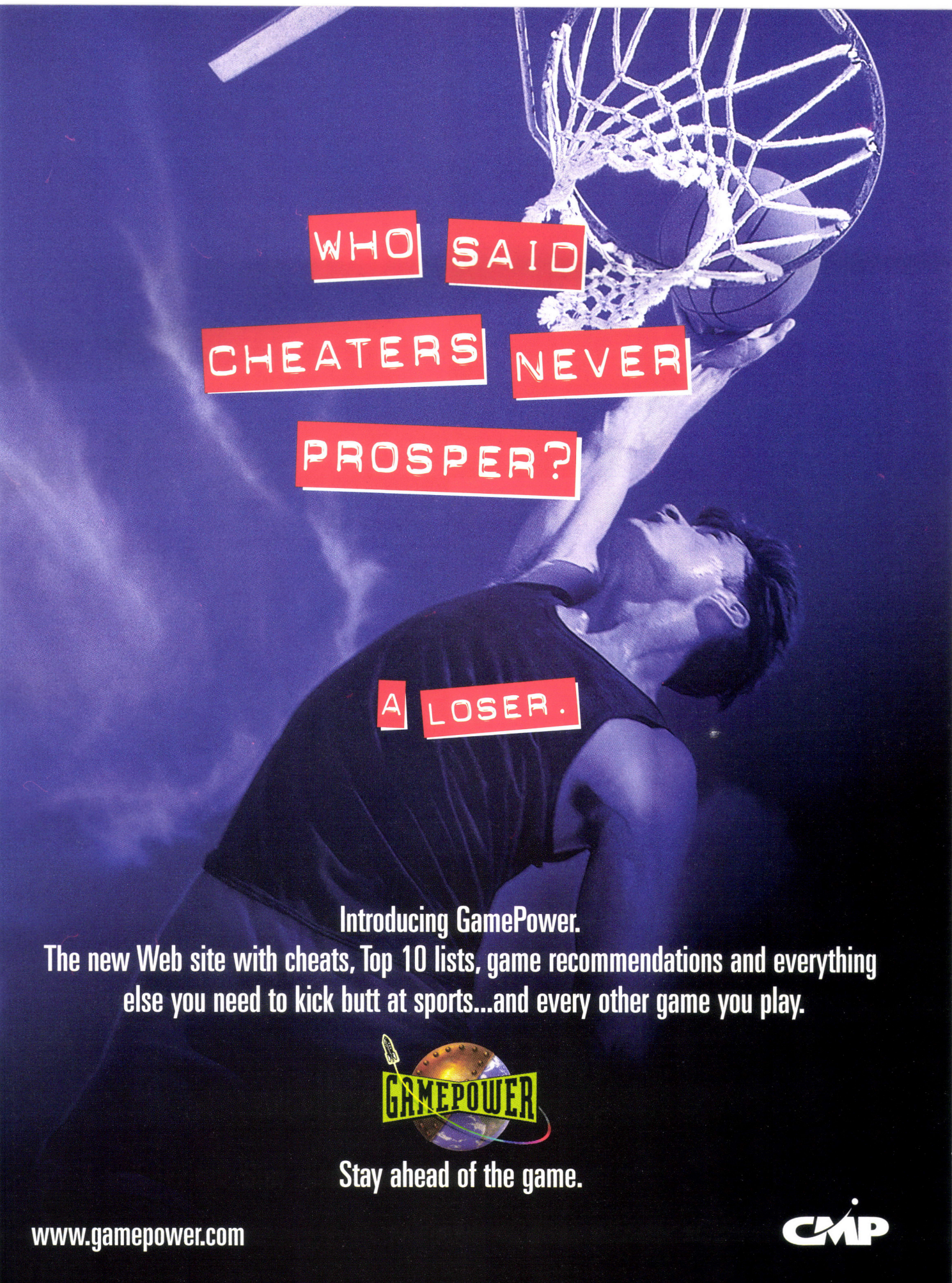
GAMEPLAY:	A
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS :	A
SOUND CHECK:	A
OVERALL	A
MULTIPLAYER:	N/A

An epic adventure with a strong storyline, involving background, and surprising replayability.

DEVELOPER:	Kalisto Entertainment
PUBLISHER:	MicroProse 800-695-4263
WEB:	www.darkearth.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P75, 8MB RAM, 60MB HD, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P120, 16MB RAM, 300MB HD, AWE32 sound card
STREET PRICE:	$60

TIPS

▼ Train with Zed and Phedoria to learn the ins and outs of combat. Here's your chance to hone your skills without losing any lifeforce. ▼ If you find yourself a wanted man, there's help to be found at the archivist Sesekan's library. ▼ Once the Lower City is cordoned off, the only way to gain access is to free Kalhi from the prison. Steal Bogdaran's uniform, and she'll be able to distract the guards while you sneak behind the cart blocking the platform. ▼ Interested in assembling a pre-cataclysm flamethrower? Danrys can do it for you if you bring him the blueprints and a handle. ▼ Once you've identified the traitor, you still have to convince people. Start with Phedoria. ▼ Kalhi can get you a firearm, but not before you've helped her with her malrot problem. ▼ Lory can get you the first piece of the crystal key once you find the underground passage from the upper city. ▼ In the bunker of the lower city is an explosive hidden behind a metal plaque.



Introducing GamePower.
The new Web site with cheats, Top 10 lists, game recommendations and everything else you need to kick butt at sports...and every other game you play.

GAMEPOWER

Stay ahead of the game.

www.gamepower.com

CMP



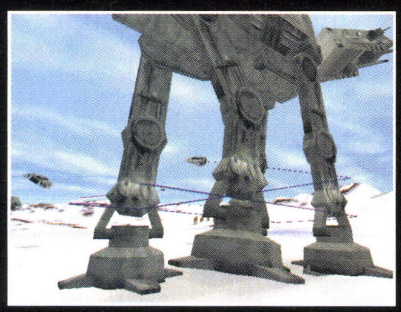




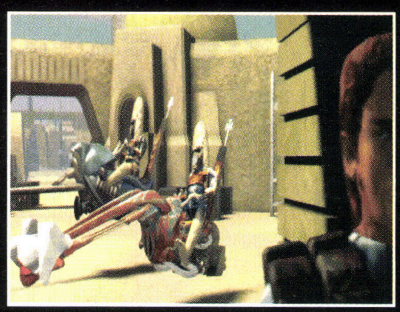




YOU'RE DASH RENDAR - QUICK ON THE TRIGGER OF A BLASTER.



IT'S YOU AND YOUR TINY SNOWSPEEDER VERSUS A GIANT, IMPERIAL AT-AT.



SPEEDER BIKE MODE - FAST-PACED ACTION WITH A KICK START.







THERE'S A NEW FACE OF EVIL IN THE UNIVERSE.

(AND YOU THOUGHT IT COULDN'T GET ANY UGLIER.)

STAR WARS®
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE™

REQUIRES 3D ACCELERATOR

Enter Prince Xizor - the newest villain in the *Star Wars* universe. In *Shadows of the Empire*, you'll encounter him along with a host of new *Star Wars* characters, vehicles and locations. With your 3D accelerator, it's a fast, sharp, colorful universe - so detailed, in fact, you can see the trigger of a blaster. Enter the fray in 5 gameplay modes; ground shooter, space combat, speeder bike, jet pack and snowspeeder - all in an effort to protect Luke from the evil clutches of Xizor - a face of evil so dark, you'll only find him in the shadows. www.lucasarts.com

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

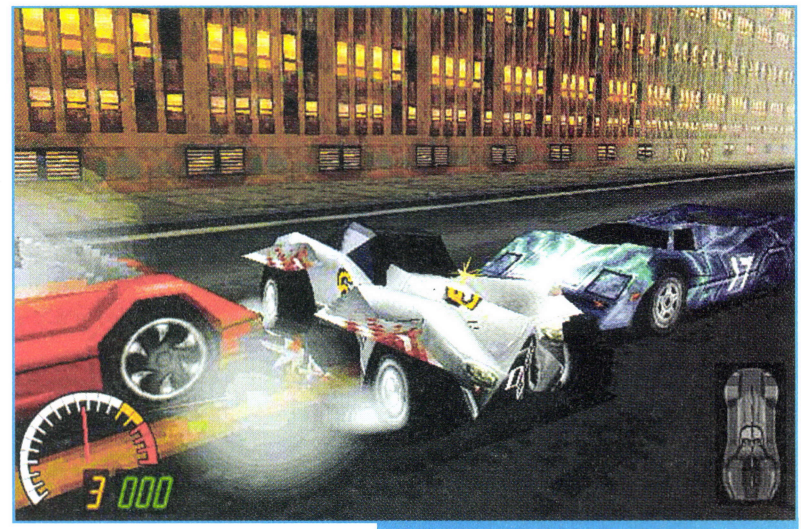
LUCAS Arts

®, TM & © 1997 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization. *Star Wars* and the LucasArts logo are registered trademarks, and Shadows of the Empire is a trademark of Lucasfilm Ltd.

OLD BOX NEW GAME

By Bob Lindstrom

That game sitting on your shelf may get a whole new life — if you've got a 3D accelerator card. Companies are retrofitting older titles with 3D patches, and the results are often scintillating.



Fog and fire join the Carmageddon lineup, thanks to a new patch.

Until the latest generation of graphics accelerators revolutionized PC gaming, 3D wasn't exactly a distinguished entertainment concept. Consider:

- *House of Wax*: Serial killer Vincent Price upstaged by The Paddle Ball Guy
- Captain Eo: Michael Jackson goes where no man has gone before…wrapped in tin foil
- *Gorilla at Large*: A guy in a suit as Gorilla, Raymond "Perry Mason" Burr as Large
- Paper glasses
- Cardboard headaches

But most everyone viewing the eye-boggling array of 3D-accelerated games scheduled for current and upcoming release will draw the same conclusion as LucasArts' Steve Daughterman: "By Christmas 1998, pretty much everything is going to have 3D acceleration support. It's the future of computer gaming."

Fortunately, for those of us who have our old favorites, it's also the past of computer gaming. Unwilling to let new technology be the sole domain of new products, several companies are retrofitting already-released games to exploit the velocity and visual sizzle of chips like the 3Dfx Voodoo, NEC PowerVR, and Rendition's Vérité.

The painterly Outlaws gets a new sheen with 3Dfx.

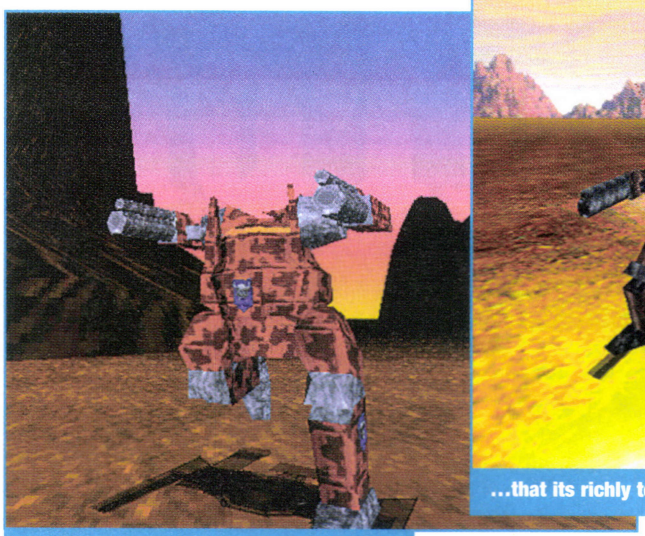


Suddenly, a golden oldie is resurrected with fresh energy and—in the best 3D retrofits—all-new playability. Players can fall in love all over again with such sleepers as Outlaws, Whiplash, Die Hard Trilogy, and Scorched Planet. On the commercial side, if game publishers find that a freely distributed 3D patch (a small program that updates the old one) boosts sales and increases the shelf life of a vintage title…well, everyone loves a win-win situation.

"A good example," says David Coy, Interplay's executive producer of OEM products, "is Jetfighter III. The original version of this flight simulator came out about seven/eight months ago. We released a 3Dfx patch and saw a huge spike in sales at retail for about two/three weeks. Let's face it: Technology sells."

The pioneers of the 3D retrofit were two games that already had superb play value but benefited from the breathtaking graphic upgrade of 3D acceleration: Quake and Tomb Raider. Sure, both games are at the pinnacle of achievement for 1996/97 anyway, but once you've seen the flickering light-source–shaded halls and the smoothly mapped visuals of their 3D retrofits, only gamers with a padlock on their checkbooks are going to be able to avoid rushing out for a new 3D card.

"Right now, the people who have the 3D accelerators are the hardcore game players, who are very technologically advanced," says Daughterman. "They also happen to be our core audience, and we want to serve those people." Earlier this year, LucasArts issued a 3D patch to spiff up the graphics in its POV shooter Outlaws, and one's on the way for the popular X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter as well.



MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries didn't have quite the look...



...that its richly textured 3D add-on did.

1 + 1 Does Not Equal 2

If you're a new owner of a 3D card or have been shopping around, you've probably already noticed that acceleration's apparent technological edge seems to vary from program to program, even on the same card. Why? Because all 3D patches are not created equal.

"You can do a 3D patch on several different levels," says Coy. "First, you can just add support for accelerator cards. By using the custom chips for 3D rendering, you generally get a speed-performance increase. Second, you can go in and turn on some of the specialized features of the cards, like MIP-mapping and light-source shading; in general, the cards are 16-bit color as opposed to 8-bit or less. That's a big advantage. Finally, you can actually redo some of the artwork, have fully 16-bit artwork, and increase the number of polygons in 3D objects, because now you have the power to push more complex objects around. At that point, you pretty much have a new product."

Activision has gone both routes in its pursuit of 3D perfection. Interstate '76, the driving sim that celebrates all those '70s Southwest vigilante flicks where the blue-collar hero defies The Man, got the free, downloadable patch treatment with faster frame rate and smoothed-out visuals. By contrast, MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries received a 3D makeover with improvements throughout, and, like EF2000 v. 2.0, was released as an all-new product.

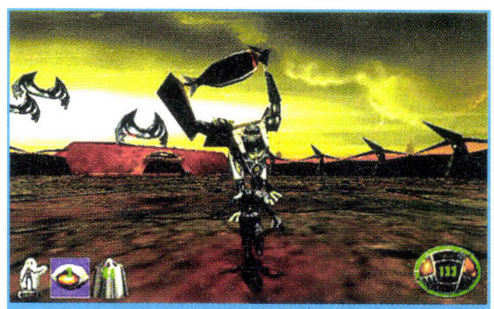
How to decide: patch or new release? "It's quite an issue to actually rerelease a product," notes Coy. "We tend to prefer patches. Of course, the goal is to try to get it in the box when it first comes out, and, increasingly, we'll be able to do that. But we find that most people looking for a patch are going to have Internet access, so it's pretty easy for them to download a patch after the initial release."

The Internet is the key to getting 3D retrofit patches to the owners of the original games. In some cases, explains Daughterman, LucasArts can send a mailing to registered owners. "But our customers tend to be pretty well informed and find out when we post a new patch or update on the Web," he says.

"Some of the chip manufacturers, like 3Dfx, are also very aggressive in letting their customers know about new games that support their chips," adds Julia Roether, Interplay's communications manager.

If you're a webcrawler on a quest to see if your favorite game has a 3D retrofit, start by visiting PC Games Online at **www.pcgames.com**. You can also check out the Web download page or the ftp site of the game's publisher. For more general information—and possibly a comprehensive list of 3D patches for existing games—check your 3D board's manufacturer's Web site or that of the creator of its custom chips. (Also see "Hunting the Elusive Patch," above.)

Until the magic day arrives—probably sometime in 1998—when all appropriate products will ship in stunning 3D-accelerated versions, we early adopters need to show off our wisdom by blowing the bucks on a new 3D card. Patching a piece of the software past is a great way to begin enjoying the software future. ■



MDK already looked good; in 3Dfx, it's stunning.

Four-Star 3D

Some 3D patches spiff up the graphics, some charge up the frame rate. Only a select few completely transform the play value of a product from solid to scintillating. These three (all available on our Web site) make our short list of outstanding 3D retrofits:

Interstate '76

Activision

With its bell-bottomed vigilante scenarios and funkadelic atmosphere, this driving sim hit the Billy Jack target for retro '70s action. The 3D patch funks up the graphics but, more importantly, jacks up the admittedly spotty original frame rates to significantly improve the already-hot playability.

Whiplash

Interplay

We always wanted to like Whiplash more than we did. Despite its insanely winding courses, that headlong sense of speed was somehow missing. Add the 3D patch, and Whiplash snaps your neck with the dizzyingly swift frame rates and vertigo-inducing velocity we were seeking.

Carmageddon

Interplay

Controversial. Gory. Hard to install. An HD-storage pig. But when we're not playing Carmageddon, we're thinking about playing Carmageddon. Install the 3D patch and forget about wasting time with the choppy hi-res version. Suddenly the look, the fast-paced play, and the visceral impact are as smashing as the action. —*BL*

Hunting the Elusive Patch

Video-card and game-publisher Web sites are top sources when you're scavenging for the latest in 3D retrofits. For some of the more popular 3D-acceleration technologies, these locations are good spots to begin a big byte hunt:

General 3D Card Information
dimension3d.com/

3Dfx
www.3dfx.com/download/patches/index.html

ATI
www.atitech.ca/3dalley/

Matrox Mystique
www.matrox.com/mgaweb/drivers/patches.htm

PowerVR
www.powervr.com/html/software.htm

Rendition
www.rendition.com/download.html

ViRGE/VX
www.s3.com/enduser/s3dsw/

The Baron



Bullets riddle your plane, shattering wood and shredding canvas. The sky screams with red tracers, smoke and explosions. And as the Red Baron himself blasts out of the sun's glare... as your palms start to sweat and your pulse races... as you hear the ominous groan of stressed wings the instant before they shatter... you realize that this is much more than just a game. This is a taste of history. And your next move will determine whether you become a legend... or another kill in the Baron's book.

Eight years ago we set the standard for flight simulation with a product so timeless and revolutionary that it has remained unchallenged... until now.

The Baron is Back.

Visit our website and download the original Red Baron™ for free! www.sierra.com/RB2

SIERRA®

Dynamix®

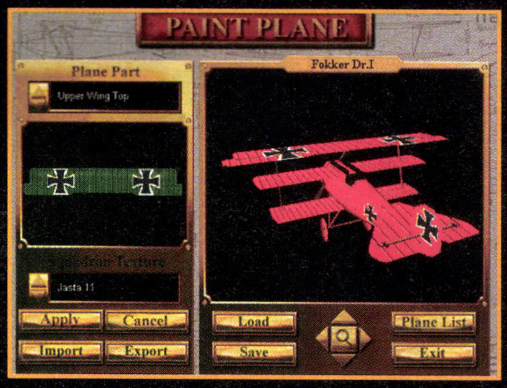
©1997 Sierra On-Line, Bellevue, WA 98007. ® and/or ™ designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc.
All rights reserved. Windows 95 is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. 006713000

is Back!

Over three years in the making, Red Baron II is an epic achievement. From gamer directed features to state-of-the art technology, it is the ultimate recreation of the men, machines and experience that marked the birth of aerial combat.



- Dynamix's revolutionary new 3Space 2.0™ engine takes a giant leap ahead of the competition with unmatched realism in terrain modelling.
- User-definable difficulty levels for players of all skill levels.
- Multiplayer dogfighting action featuring internet, network and head-to-head modem support.
- Fly single missions for quick action or select Campaign play for a full tour of duty.
- Over 40 unique aircraft with 22 flyable planes.



- The Dynamix Mission Builder™ allows players to completely customize their missions.
- Dynamix's revolutionary new ACE AI™ system recreates the skills, tactics and personalities of historical and non-historical pilots with unbelievable realism.



- The Plane Paintshop™ allows players to customize the colors, insignias and look of their planes, using either provided patterns or by importing artwork of their own from any standard paint program.

Red Baron II™



PC GAMES A-LIST™

BEST OF

Civilization II
(MicroProse)

Comanche 3
(NovaLogic)

Command & Conquer: Red Alert
(Westwood Studios)

Daggerfall
(Bethesda Softworks)

Diablo
(Blizzard Entertainment)

Duke Nukem 3D
(GT Interactive)

Dungeon Keeper
(Electronic Arts)

FPS: Baseball Pro '98
(Sierra On-Line)

Links LS '98
(Access Software)

Lords of the Realm II
(Sierra On-Line)

Master of Orion II
(MicroProse)

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries
(Activision)

MDK
(Playmates Interactive)

The Neverhood
(DreamWorks)

Pro Pinball: Timeshock!
(Empire Interactive)

Quake
(GT Interactive)

Syndicate Wars
(Electronic Arts)

Twinsen's Odyssey
(Activision)

X-COM: Apocalypse
(MicroProse)

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter
(LucasArts)

For games we've rated as an A or A- over the past year, admittance to the Best of the A-List is the ultimate honor; if it's on this list, it's not just great, it *rocks*. Serious gamers will want all of these titles in their collections.

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING

Yes, the *PC Games* editors play tons of games, but there are some we've stuck with beyond the call of duty. Here are the five games we've been playing the most over the past month.

1. Shadow Warrior
2. Worms II (alpha)
3. Hexen II (shareware)
4. Quake
5. Tennis Elbow



HOW WE RATE GAMES

Here at *PC Games* we use a letter-grade system to rate games. Everyone knows what our grades mean without needing an in-depth explanation or clever chart: an A+ is the best score possible and an F is a complete bust. To give you a better feel for the overall quality of a title, we rate each game in six key areas. We also select a Game of the Month for each issue. We review games when and only when the makers say they're ready for review.

GAME of the MONTH: The *PC Games* Game of the Month is the one title among the month's releases that stands out from the rest. While it's generally the best overall game of the month, a game will occasionally warrant this honor not because it's the highest-rated game in the issue, but because it's a standout in one or more areas.

GAMEPLAY: In a nutshell, how much fun is it to play? This takes into account the quality of the game's interface and control scheme.

GETTING STARTED: How much reading, studying, and hardware-tweaking are required before you can start to have fun? (The less the better.)

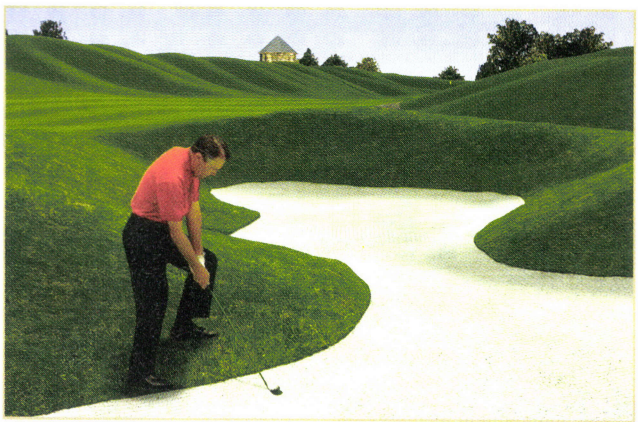
GRAPHICS: How advanced and attractive are the game's visual elements, and how well do they serve the game?

SOUND CHECK: How good are the game's sound effects and musical score, and how well do they serve the game?

OVERALL GRADE: Taking everything into account, how strongly do we recommend the game for purchase?

MULTIPLAYER: How much value will you get from the game's multiplayer element, if there is one? (N/A = not available) This independent rating takes into account ease of multiplayer setup.

AT LAST, A GOLF GAME WITH NO HANDICAP.



FEEL THE CLUB THROUGH YOUR FINGERTIPS. YOUR MOUSE IS POISED TO ADDRESS THE BALL. A SUBTLE OPENING OF YOUR WRIST ANGLES THE CLUBFACE. SWEEP THE MOUSE BACK, THEN FORWARD IN ONE ELEGANT MOTION. A SMOOTH AND RHYTHMIC SWING, FULL OF POWER & CONTROL. TRUE CONTACT. MOUSE ON BALL.

A low drive into the wind? A fade with a six-iron round a tree? An explosion shot from a deep pot bunker? You have the technology. Serious control. Serious golf. It feels perfect. And it looks perfect too. Flowing terrain, surveyed to the last inch. Fine textures down the rolling fairway to the contoured green. The bunkers raked, and 20,000 frames of animation put you in the correct stance even in the most awkward lie.

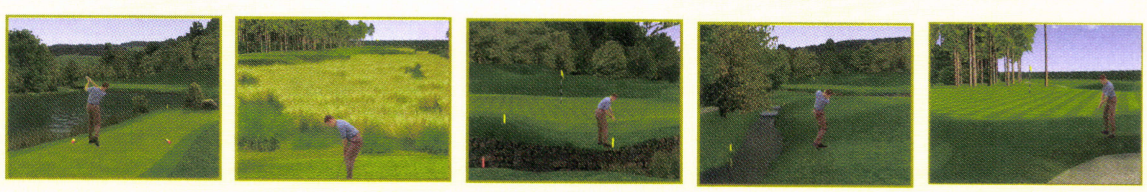
UNIQUE FEATURES. UNIQUELY REALISTIC.

THE Golf PRO

Featuring Gary Player

A STROKE OF GENIUS

AND THE REST OF THE SCORE? EXTENSIVE TV-STYLE COMMENTARY, FULL INTERNET PLAY AND CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR UP TO 32 GOLFERS, 18 PRIVATE LESSONS FROM GARY PLAYER, 36 COMPELLING HOLES OF GOLF ON HILTON HEAD NATIONAL, SOUTH CAROLINA & ST MELLION INTERNATIONAL, ENGLAND. INTELLIGENT HANDICAPPING AND RANGE OF COMPETITIONS.



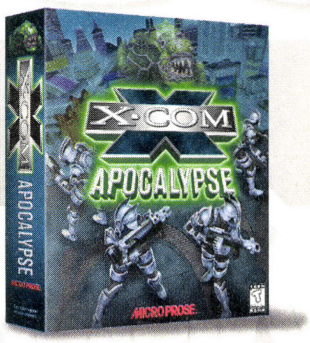
EMPIRE INTERACTIVE USA
TELEPHONE NO: 415 439 4854
FAX NO: 415 283 3370
WEBSITE: http://www.empire-us.com

Hilton Head National · Gary Player · St Mellion International

empire® INTERACTIVE

~~heroin~~
~~s & m~~
~~unfiltered cigs~~
~~binge drinking~~
~~creamed corn~~
~~one night stands~~

hell, what's left?



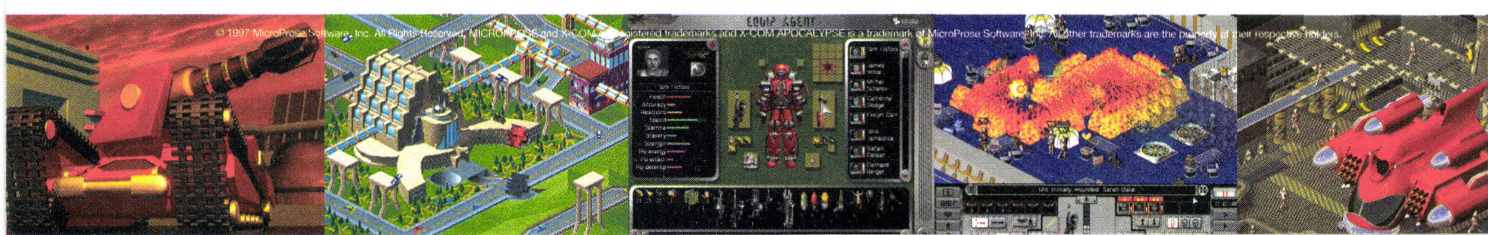


X-COM: APOCALYPSE

the most addictive (and still good for you)
"beat the crap out of aliens" strategy game

MICROPROSE®
www.microprose.com

Available on PC CD-ROM. Visit your local retailer or call: 1-800-695-GAME day or night (U.S. and CANADA)


© 1997 MicroProse Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. MICROPROSE and X-COM are registered trademarks and X-COM APOCALYPSE is a trademark of MicroProse Software, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

Redline: Taking Shape

By Rob Smith

Over the past few months, we've looked at some of the elements that go into making a game. Redline has been taking shape before our eyes, and now's the right time to take a look at the game itself—how it's playing and what new tweaks, adjustments, and alterations are being implemented before it reaches its February ship date.

Developer Beyond Games is hitting the "first mini-game milestone" on October 1, when one mission will be fully playable, and one arena ready for combat. At press time, Beyond's chances of making that milestone looked excellent.

But there have been some changes made to ensure punctuality. It was refreshing to hear in this saga's first installment how Beyond Games didn't bother with conceptual art, instead etching ideas on a whiteboard—to be tweaked, rubbed out, and revised on a whim. A chaotic but no less creative method, this eventually proved to not work so well. As Accolade's producer Ted Tahquechi tells us, "We wanted to structure all the art ideas under the 'industrial gothic' banner, and creating conceptual art for each of the mission-level designs made sticking to that path easier."

Art is key to Redline's development, to the point where the original five Beyond Games members have been joined by about 10 other people, many working in new art teams. A new technology for texturing the maps used in level design (using one file rather than multiple tiles to make up the level) was implemented two weeks prior to our sneak peek (and play). The point was to improve frame rates, and after disappearing into its Salt Lake City–based cocoon, Beyond emerged with a fully working texture model.



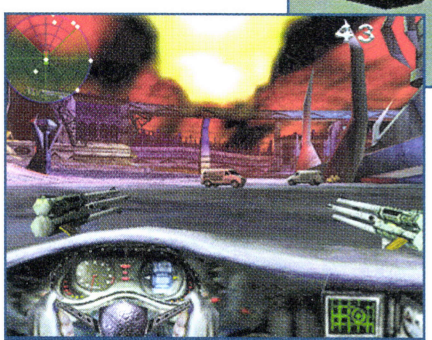
Fighting on foot can end in a bloody mess.

With this model in place, it was time for the textures themselves to be tweaked and the level designs to be worked to create the cohesive missions backing up the ongoing story.

Redline will ship with 20 missions—10 for each of the two gangs (the Red Sixers and the Company)—that in many cases will present very different objectives and requirements. For example, in one level, the Red Sixers attack a base to overcome its defenses. The same mission from the Company's standpoint requires you to marshal forces and defend.



When on foot, you can run and jump into any abandoned cars. And carjacking is going to be a crucial arena tactic.



Roof-mounted rockets explode with deadly force.

The Redline universe goes beyond the two gangs, too. "We definitely want the players to be aware of the other gangs inhabiting this world," Tahquechi comments. Indeed, the PlayStation version due to appear some time after the February PC launch will feature a similar concept but introduce two other gangs, the religiously fanatic Templars and the cybernetic, diseased Lepers. To maintain universe continuity, truckloads of these gang members will make quick cameo appearances in the PC version.



And stay dead!

Vehicle physics and design adjustments are also well underway. You'll begin the game with a choice of two vehicles, out of 16 total per gang. In multiplayer mode (capable of supporting 16 players), you'll get to mark your vehicle with your own insignia, in addition to the marks indicating rank within the gang.

Further gameplay mechanics continue to be tweaked and debated. What do you think about having to get out of your car in an arena to pick up power-ups? It could add whole new timing and strategy elements, but gameplay balances still need to be finalized.

To be sure, the 3D-hardware powered graphics engine is certainly making Redline look fantastic. Based on our turn at the steering wheel (and on foot), the gameplay's also pointed in the right direction. There's still a ways to go, but so far, Redline's looking good.

REDLINE

DEVELOPER:	Beyond Games
PUBLISHER:	Accolade
WEB:	www.accolade.com
AVAILABLE:	February 1998

THE MAGIC ALMANAC

Your Guide to the **IMAGINATIVE** *World of Magic: the Gathering®*



Magic brings divergent groups together in the spirit of competition. Group hug everybody!



fig. 3a
THE SALUTE



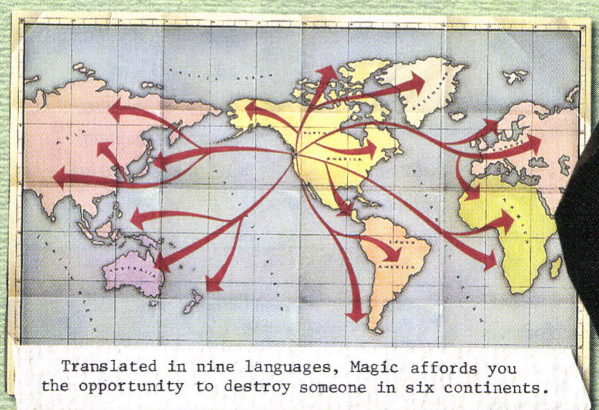
fig. 3b
THE MAGIC SALUTE



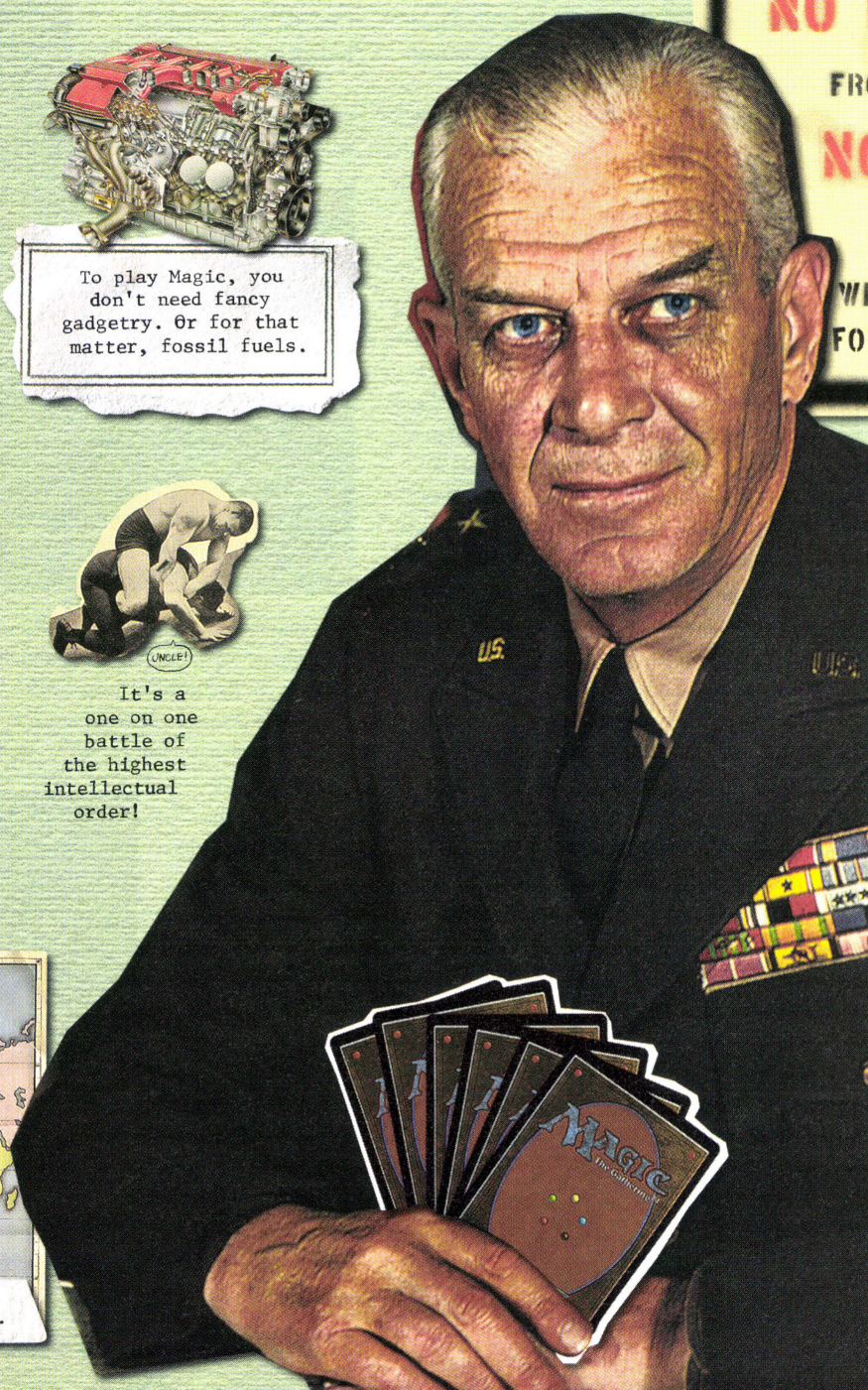
©1997 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Wizards of the Coast and Magic: The Gathering are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Portal is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. TM©1997 Vince Lombardi by OMG Worldwide.

To play Magic, you don't need fancy gadgetry. Or for that matter, fossil fuels.

It's a one on one battle of the highest intellectual order!



Translated in nine languages, Magic affords you the opportunity to destroy someone in six continents.





RE TAKING ORDERS

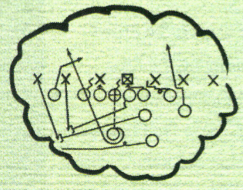
TELLECTUAL SUBORDINATES!

ORE BONEHEADS

IN YOUR BATTALION!

GIC: THE GATHERING, YOU ARE THE

AR GENERAL OF YOUR OWN ARMY!

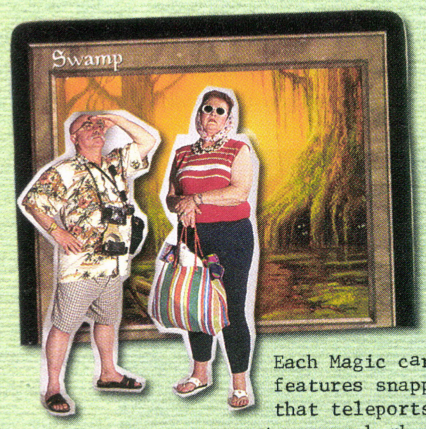




Like a good football coach, a formidable Magic player always has a game plan.



Drop and give me fifty, wuss! See, power is gratifying, is it not? With Magic: the Gathering, you'll test your leadership moxie by deploying your armada of creatures and spells. Join the fray! Arm yourself today!

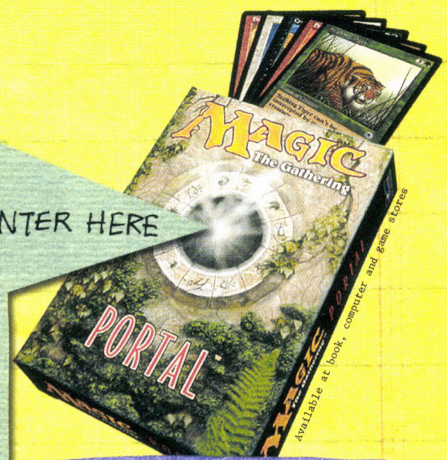


Each Magic card features snappy artwork that teleports you to a strange, suburb-free world.





ENTER HERE



MAGIC The Gathering

Wizards of the Coast

For store locations: 206-624-0933 or www.wizards.com

ONLINE

SNEAK PEEK

FireTeam

By Rob Smith

Time was when computer-game design was exciting. It was innovative. It was dynamic. It tested the mettle of some keen programming minds. Technology, to some degree, has fundamentally changed the face of computer gaming: with Pentium processors and 3D accelerators, polygon counts are higher, colors deeper, and textures more realistic. But one hurdle remains—the new frontier of the online game.

Are you ready for a re-education?

"We want to be proactive in bringing the team-building experience together," says Ned Lerner, Multitude's president, whose résumé lists such noteworthy titles as Ultima Underworld and System Shock. "We want the whole community thing with friends meeting and talking," adds Project Leader Art Min.

At its simplest level, FireTeam is a four-player, isometric action game that takes place in a confined area, with Capture-the-Flag and other team-play parameters directing gameplay requirements. Eight players will be able to compete in four-on-four contests in three or four different world environments. Current plans include an industrial office, urban landscape, and jungle environment as the settings for these cooperative battles, as the teams use their rifles and grenades to do serious damage to the opposition.

Game mechanics are simple—one weapon, grenades, and health—but the action involves strategy.



As in other games, FireTeamers can talk by typing messages. But the immediacy of voice commands gives gameplay a unique flavor.





In a nod to dino-mania, FireTeam gives you the option of playing raptors vs. hunters.

Start-up company Multitude is testing out FireTeam, a new online game that not only promises tremendous entertainment but, more importantly, threatens to alter the paralyzed mind-set of the current deathmatch gamer.

I'm not one to knock a good deathmatch. I'm a typical action-gamer who, when confronted with FireTeam, was being asked to come to grips with some unfamiliar ideas. But after a few demonstrations of an early version, I can say that the game rings with the potential to reverberate throughout the game industry.

Why? It's all down to communication. This online-only action/strategy game doesn't just emphasize cooperative team play; it insists on it. The most significant feature facilitating this cooperation is the use of verbal responses over headsets.

FireTeam will ship as a retail product (online pricing plans are still under heated, inconclusive discussion) with a microphone-and-speaker headset. It's this equipment that pushes FireTeam to the conceptual edge. "It's social engineering," acknowledges Min. "FireTeam offers the chance to play together, cooperatively, which has never really been achieved before."

As an online-only project from its conception (despite suggestions that a single-player version might appease financial backers in the short-term), FireTeam has been designed to push the online gaming experience forward. During the game, a line-of-sight model is used to highlight what each character can see, also indicating the last known position of the enemy. To represent fast-action combat, a percentage meter displays your chances of hitting with a shot—the more time spent aiming, the better your chances. With each game designed to last just 5 to 10 minutes, the incentive to come back for "just one more" appears well balanced.

A script-based engine will be flexible enough to re-create many real-life events in a timely fashion to keep FireTeam's well-researched lobby model buzzing with eager, friendly combatants. The extensive level editor will also add to this longevity goal. But Multitude doesn't expect the ride to the forefront of online gaming to be easy. After all, stresses Lerner: "This is something state-of-the-art, new and unique. And [innovation] can be painful."

That it may be. But if gamers can get over the hate factor that dominates deathmatches and embrace the communication needed for successful cooperative play, FireTeam may very well teach the gaming masses to work together.

FIRETEAM

PUBLISHER:	Multitude
WEB:	www.fireteam.com
AVAILABLE:	Early 1998

HEAT.NET!

THE ONLY INTERNET GAME NETWORK ENDORSED BY THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE!

WHAT THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE SAID ABOUT THE HEAT.NET 5-POINT PLAN:

POINT #1: MAKING INTERNET GAMING EASY.

What the CDI said about being able to log on to HEAT.NET, download the free HEAT software and play for free, or simply purchase the retail package (includes six months' premium membership, a HEAT CD with games, and internet access from MCI): ***"HEAT.NET'S SIMPLIFIED START-UP PROCESS WILL JUMP-START WORLD PEACE BY ALLOWING PEOPLE TO START DIVERTING THEIR AGGRESSIVE URGES AWAY FROM REALITY IMMEDIATELY!"***



POINT #2: CREATING THE FASTEST INTERNET GAMING EXPERIENCE.

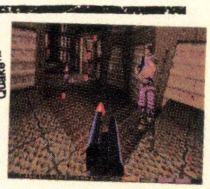
What the CDI said about HEAT.NET having the smoothest, fastest internet gaming available:

"THE FASTER EVERY HUMAN CAN PURGE THEIR EVIL REPTILIAN COMPLEX BUILDUP, THE BETTER FOR ALL OF US!"

POINT #3: COMPATIBILITY WITH MOST MULTI-PLAYER CD-ROM PC GAMES.

What the CDI said about HEAT being compatible with almost every multi-player CD-ROM PC game, after playing their favorites, including Quake,™ WarCraft II™ and Scud: Industrial Evolution,™ as well as HEAT-exclusives, like DeathDrome,™ Alien Race,™ Net Fighter™ and "intense" HEAT-only Quake Mods: ***"THIS WIDE RANGE OF REPTILIAN COMPLEX OUTLETS PUTS THE POWER OF PEACE INTO THE HANDS OF THE MASSES!"***


Net Fighter™


Quake™



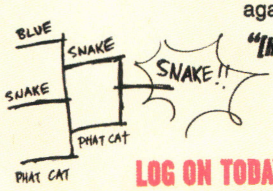
POINT #4: OFFERING REWARDS FOR FREQUENT PLAYERS.

What the CDI said about HEAT being the only network to award frequent player points (Degrees) that can be redeemed for prizes:

"WHAT AN IDEA! IF PEOPLE PLAY MORE OFTEN, THEY WILL QUELL AGGRESSIVE URGES MORE OFTEN AND DECREASE REAL-LIFE AGGRESSION MORE OFTEN!"

POINT #5: CREATING COMPETITION WITH LADDERS AND EVENTS.

What the CDI said about HEAT's automated, secure events and the ability to rise to the top against the best competition in the world:



"[HEAT] CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT FOR...THE ATTAINMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PEACE— WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL LEAD TO A GREATER WORLD PEACE!"

LOG ON TODAY TO THE INTERNET GAME NETWORK THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE SAID "SHOULD WIN *THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE!*"

HEAT IS THE ANSWER!

THE ONLY INTERNET GAME NETWORK ENDORSED BY THE CYBERDIVERSION INSTITUTE!

© 1997 SegaSoft Networks, Inc. HEAT, HEAT.NET, Net Fighter and Alien Race are trademarks of SegaSoft Networks, Inc. Scud: Industrial Evolution and its characters are ™ and © Rob Schrab. DeathDrome is a trademark of Viacom New Media, Inc. All other product names are the trademarks of their respective owners.

IMPERIA

THE FINE ART OF CONQUERING THE WORLD

It's one thing to create a working civilization, *quite* another to lead that civilization to world dominance. IMPERIALISM™ inspires you to do both. Combining elements of resource management, economic trade, exploration, diplomatic maneuvering and military conquest, this multi-faceted strategy game allows you to attempt what few in history have dared: *unify the world under one leader!*

To achieve victory you must develop your country's infrastructure through deft manipulation of delicate economic, diplomatic and military resources. Then, skillfully maneuver it to a position of dominance in the Council of Governors.

Easy to say. Difficult to accomplish.

Your Cabinet Ministers will, of course, offer varying amounts of advice.



SSG®
A MINDSCAPE® COMPANY

LISM™





But ultimate control over the fate of your nation is yours and yours alone. However you handle it, the vigorous climb to the top of this earth-like world is a challenge with no equal!

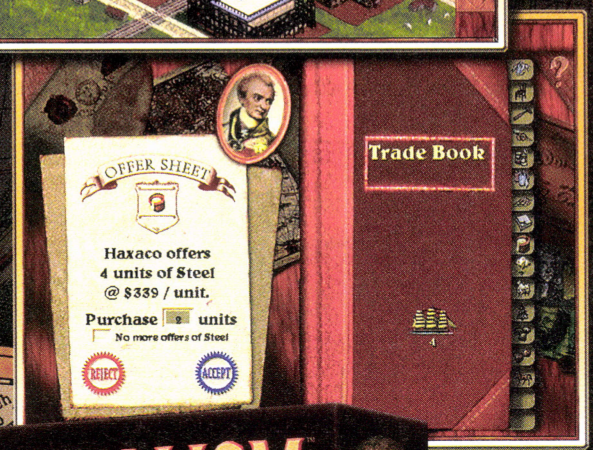
IMPERIALISM.
The World is Within Your Grasp.

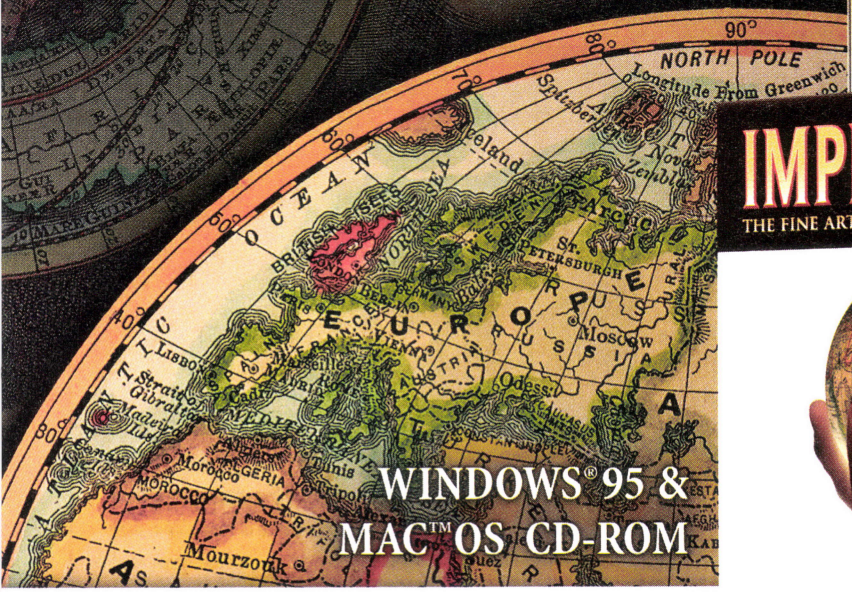
www.imperialism.com

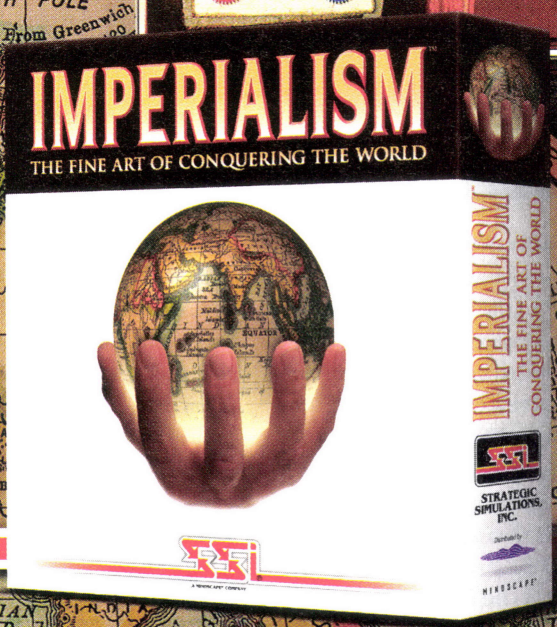
Developed by Frog City.

To Order: Visit your retailer or call 1-800-234-3088 (USA & Canada) with Visa or MasterCard.

IMPERIALISM is a trademark of Strategic Simulations, Inc.
©1997 Strategic Simulations, Inc., a Mindscape Company.
All rights reserved. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective holders.







WINDOWS® 95 &
MAC™ OS CD-ROM



SNEAK PEEK

The Golf Pro



While the club selection ensures certain distances, the actual shot is all down to your timing and swift movement of the mouse.

The patience of a saint is something that has sadly passed me by. Odd, really, when you consider my penchant for watching major golfing championships from beginning to end. I even sit glued to the full five days of a cricket Test match. This doesn't translate to PC golf games, though. As often as I've tried my hand at Links LS '98, and despite the many hours I've spent on the Jack Nicklaus 4 courses, computer golf is always appealing for the first few holes, but soon grows frustrating. Eventually, I start hitting careless, over-extended, uncontrollable shots.

Get into the swing of things

I'm not going to get that cavalier option with Empire's latest foray into the golfing world. Featuring a mouse-control technique that's been some two years in the tweaking, The Golf Pro could genuinely revolutionize the way you look at all those three-click games. What's important about it is that the swing routine needed with the mouse is a side-to-side method that lends itself far more closely to the actual feel of a true golf swing than Sierra's TrueSwing in FPS: Golf.

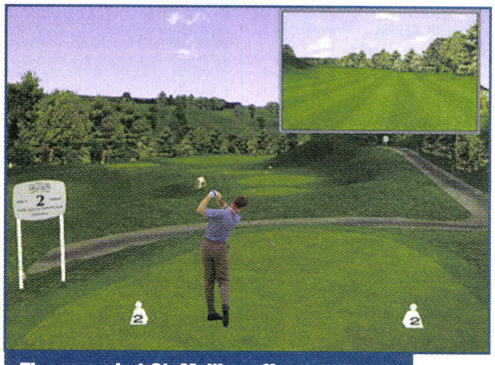
The timing of button releases and speed, trajectory, and mouse movement make coming to grips with the control method something that'll certainly take practice. But the promise of a golf simulation that actually captures the tactile qualities of a swing makes this game noteworthy. Draw and fade, punch and high-lob shots are all controlled by subtle movements and turning of the mouse—and two difficulty levels ensure a smooth learning curve before you tackle the real nuances. To aid the onscreen representation, the game incorporates extensive motion-capture, filmed at 100 frames per second to ensure fine representation of the speed and detail of a swing.

Because the courses are fully rendered, each shot can be viewed from any angle. Commentary offers context-sensitive help—you'll be told what you're actually doing wrong with the mouse if you're consistently pulling or fading the ball or hitting scrubbers.

Two courses will come with the final version shipping in November: the beautiful Jack Nicklaus–designed St. Mellion in Cornwall, England, and the Gary Player–designed Hilton Head National. Player also supplies a multimedia walkthrough that addresses many of the nuances of playing the game at this realistic level.

The Golf Pro is the first sim to truly challenge the current thinking in this genre—and it has the potential to make a real impact.

—Rob Smith



The second at St. Mellion offers an open drive, and a reverse-angle camera inset lets you see the ball's trajectory.

THE GOLF PRO

PUBLISHER:	Empire Interactive
WEB:	www.empire-us.com
AVAILABLE:	November 1997



VIRTUAL POOL 2

Virtual Pool played a really good game when it was launched in October '95. Now, out of the blue, Virtual Pool 2 has appeared, sporting better graphics and a whole lot of extras. These include 64 computer opponents, better AI, and tournament modes. What's more, you can call shots and safeties for a more realistic experience. And an enhanced physics model will improve cue-and-ball interaction and even allow jump shots. What could be better? Besides supporting the familiar 9-ball and 8-ball games, Virtual Pool 2 will include such variants as 10-ball and 3-ball. The multimedia training is being improved, and videos of various trick shots add to the overall package. All the elements that made the original so entertaining seem to be here, along with hints and our ever-favorite cheat, tracking.

POWERBOAT RACING

And they're off! VR Sports' Powerboat Racing will give PC racers the chance to hit the tide, with action and options galore. Six high-speed tracks will put you in Norway (plenty of cool tunnels, waterfalls, and jumps) and the Grand Canyon, among other places. But that's not all: Shifty types will love the two to three short cuts in each race—you never know where you might end up. You'll also have your choice of three engine sizes, day or night races, and arcade, practice, championship, or slalom modes. There'll be multiplay, too, of course, for up to eight racers. If you like watersports and quick thrills, check this out.



Discovery CHANNEL MULTIMEDIA™

Thousands of eyes are watching your every move. The next one could be your last.

PLANET EXPLORER

BYZANTINE

THE BETRAYAL™

You step off the plane in Turkey
and are thrown into a murderous conspiracy.
Decipher the clues. Solve the mystery.
Or pay with your life.

www.planetexplorer.com

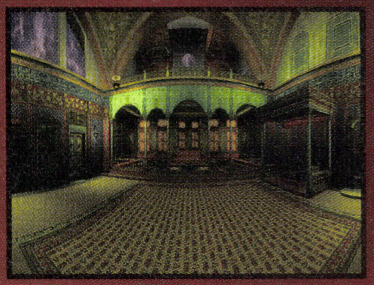
Receive a $10 rebate in the mail when you buy this game.



Journey into a corrupt world that stretches from the ancient past to worlds of virtual reality.



Delve into 6 CDs featuring 45 minutes of exotic video shot on location in Turkey.



Immerse yourself in 360° photographic environments that bring Istanbul to life.

STORMFRONT STUDIOS

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Intel MMX™

Interplay AFFILIATE PARTNERSHIP

Available on Windows® 95.

UNITED CONNECTION

United Connection® Travel Planning Software is included in every game. Purchase a United flight online by April 30, 1998, and receive a $25 Travel Certificate on your next United flight of $200 or more. Some restrictions may apply.

©1997 Discovery Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

Aliens Online

By Don St. John



You can do some serious damage with a tailwhip.

So, you thought one Alien bursting onto the scene was bad enough. Adding babies was certainly a problem. Well, how about scores of them? How about *becoming* an Alien?

Aliens Online aims to afford you the chance. Just as you're reeling from the reappearance of Ripley (and her mortal enemy) in the upcoming film *Alien Resurrection*, Aries Online Games and Interworld Productions plan to pile on the slimy horror with a first-person, online-only game. You'll get your choice: Either it plunks you outside five Alien-infested environments, or you start out in the Hive itself...brrr.

Fans of the enduring movie series are likely to be very satisfied with Aliens Online's freak-you-out quotient. Early, closed beta-test versions (the game's been in open beta since September) featured five claustrophobic, dark environments with mazelike passageways, eerie strobe lighting, ambient sounds, and weapon noises taken directly from the movies, as well as sudden drop-holes in the ductwork. Depending on how you choose to play—as space Marine or xenomorph—you're either going to be comfortable in your surroundings, or nervous. Very nervous.

On the Net, everyone can hear you scream

That choice is the central added attraction to the *Aliens* franchise, under license here from Fox Interactive. The movies always give you the perspective of Ripley and her fellow Colonial Marines. But for the first time on the PC (anybody remember the Jaguar classic Aliens vs. Predator?), you can also experience life as an Alien, starting out in the Hive and marauding through ducts in search of Marines to slash to ribbons.

The Aliens and Marines have vastly different play characteristics, which Interworld producer Jason Bell says are key to the game's play balance. "As a Marine, you're a lot slower; switch to an Alien, and you'll instantly notice how much faster you can move," he says. "But the Marines are the only ones with weapons, so if you prefer to sit back and blast away, you'll be pretty effective that way, too."

Indeed, all the Aliens can do is attack a Marine at close quarters. Thus, the Alien style of play lends itself more to the sniper mentality: as an Alien, you'll be using speed and stealth to your advantage. A common tactic is to use the locator map to pinpoint a Marine, move to the nearest drop-hole, wait until he shows up, and jump down in front of him. Marines, meanwhile, are more likely to play in typical first-person-shooter style, firing at greater ranges and taking advantage of open areas whenever possible.

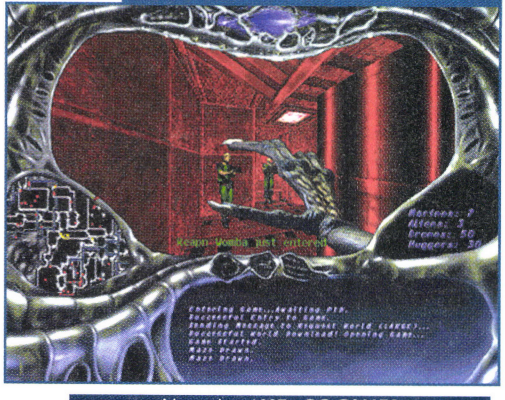
Goals are equally simple: Marines aim to kill the Alien queen and destroy the Hive, and Aliens are out to add to their numbers by using Facehuggers to impregnate Marines. Aries is setting up Aliens Online with a persistent server that will track your success in accomplishing these goals. As play continues, Marines rise through the ranks to command their own units, which—because of emphasis on community play for survival—means increased responsibility (and serious bragging rights). Meanwhile, Aliens can eventually achieve Queen status (which lets you play through your drones; as one of them dies, you simply respawn in another); and each can eventually gain its own arena.

And there will be plenty of them. The design will allow 40 players in an arena at first, with plans to expand to 100 per arena as development continues. The GameStorm servers running Aliens will allow as many as 10,000 simultaneous players. (The producers are still working out the pricing.) Whether you play as Alien or Marine, the battles in Aliens Online should be creepy and intense enough to pique your interest—and then some.

Marines need to watch their step at all times...and their backs, too.



Taking the measure of a Marine.



ALIENS ONLINE

DEVELOPER:	Interworld Productions
PUBLISHER:	Aries Online Games
WEB:	www.aliensonline.com
AVAILABLE:	December 1997

Discovery CHANNEL MULTIMEDIA

You've Just Been Gored By A Triceratops.

There Are Two Choices.

Evolve Or Die.

Evolution

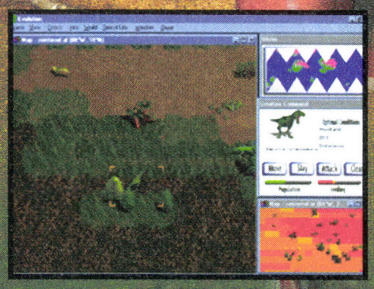
THE GAME OF INTELLIGENT LIFE™

evolution.discovery.com

Receive a $10 rebate in the mail when you buy this game.



Play through 360 million years where life evolves at 30,000 years per second.



Challenge up to 5 other opponents as you play across the whole planet.



Control more than 160 creatures as continents collide and break apart.

CROSSOVER TECHNOLOGIES

KIDS TO ADULTS M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Intel MMX™

Interplay AFFILIATE PARTNERSHIP

Available on Windows® 95.

UNITED CONNECTION

United Connection® Travel Planning Software is included in every game. Purchase a United flight online by April 30, 1998, and receive a $25 Travel Certificate on your next United flight of $200 or more. Some restrictions may apply.

©1997 Discovery Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

It not only sets a new standard in flight simulation, but goes well beyond anything out there. Introducing Sierra Pro Pilot. Never before has a single flight simulator captured this experience so completely. Here, you'll find the broad strokes and the fine touches. You'll choose from





WE DIDN'T SET OUT TO JUST A SMALL PART OF

a hangar of five civilian aircraft, ranging from the introductory Cessna 172 Skyhawk to the dual-throttled thrill of a Citation Jet. At the other end of the runway are 29 cities and over 3,000 airports, each rendered in exacting detail. All major

KIDS TO ADULTS
AGES 6+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PRE-FLIGHT CHECKLIST

- 3,000 AIRPORTS NATIONWIDE/100'S OF CITIES
- 27 MILLION ELEVATION POINTS
- GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM
- LIVE ON-LINE MAP DISPLAY
- AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL
- EVALUATED FLIGHT ASSIGNMENTS
- FLIGHT TUTORIAL
- PHOTOREALISTIC PANELS
- DUAL THROTTLES FOR MULTI-ENGINE AIRCRAFT
- CROSS-COUNTRY NAVAID COVERAGE

Dynamix

rivers, forests and canyons are afforded such faithful geographic representation they could double as a map. Within 25 nautical miles of any city, the flying world is rendered with lifelike realism. You'll hear from Air Traffic Control and other pilots, and learn to

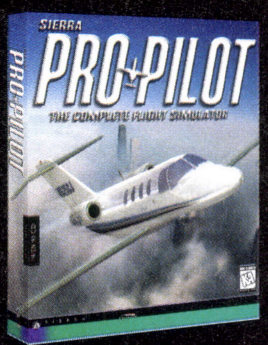




CHANGE THE WORLD.

IT CALLED THE SKY.

navigate the sky with the close company of other planes. Then, upon touchdown, debrief and compare your performance to over 30 full-motion preparation videos. This is Pro Pilot: The Complete Flight Simulator. Both a statement of what a flight sim should be today, and the promise of what one can be tomorrow.



SIERRA®

© 1997 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved. ® and ™ designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc.

www.sierra.com/propilot

SNEAK PEEK

Seven Kingdoms

By Don St. John



With a castle and power center, the Normans are in good shape.

A little bit of this, a little bit of that

Given that Seven Kingdom's working title was "Ambition," you'd expect it to cover a lot of gaming ground.

And from the looks of things, it will. In Seven Kingdoms, real-time strategy is merely one ingredient in a huge stew-pot. No stranger to strategy-fests, I-Magic isn't looking to simply clone the all-the-rage games like Command & Conquer or Warcraft—or even any of its own games. Rather, Kingdoms is meant to be a game with many facets in addition to strategy play—a little bit of economic sim, a little bit of spy intrigue, even some role-play elements. The surface is definitely three-quarter-perspective strategy fields; it's what lies underneath that I-Magic hopes will set this title apart.

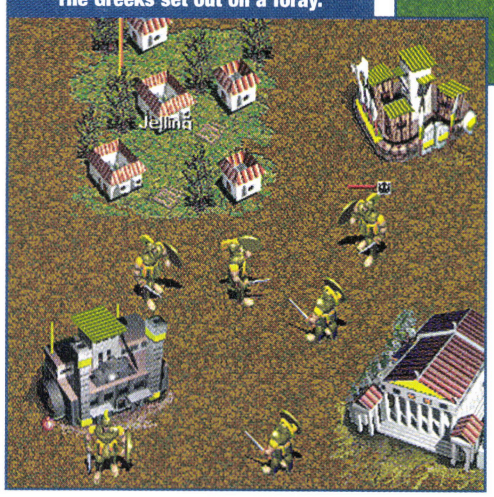
If that sounds like a "kitchen sink" approach, you're not far off. Fans of all those genres could have fun with this, even those who normally prefer diplomacy to the battles that draw strategy buffs. Of course, you're not going to get away without fighting—and if your adversaries (whether AI or human) decide to play aggressively, you may end up fighting a lot. But the game is specifically being designed by Trevor Chan, the developer behind I-Magic's Capitalism, to let you amass territory and power without resorting to sheer violence.

Kingdoms takes place in seven realms (Japan, Persia, the Mayan Empire, Viking Scandinavia, Greece, China, and Normandy); and soldiers from each have characteristics and abilities particular to their regions. That doesn't stop you from dressing one of your men in the garb of a different country and sending him off to spy. However, you'll have to make sure to maintain his loyalty—an expensive proposition—to keep your adversaries from turning or executing him.

Those double-edged Viking axes should wreak some havoc.



The Greeks set out on a foray.



In the meantime, you'll be engaging in typical strategy-building: locating resources (only three in this game—copper, iron, and wood), constructing villages and strategic buildings, and forging outward for territory.

The role-playing element comes into play with the temple, one of the buildings you can construct. Once it's finished, you can send as many men into it to pray as you dare. Enough prayers, and you successfully summon a god particular to your culture—a dragon for the Chinese, Thor for the Vikings, and so on. However, there's no guarantee that your village won't be overrun while your forces are committed elsewhere (whether in prayer or battle), so your choices are crucial.

As usual, resources and money are important elements of the game; the addition of finished goods (made from your raw resources) to the mix means the ability to set trade routes with other realms. This also plays into the strategy, because it lets you get needed resources without necessarily having to do battle for them. Naturally, it also boosts the strategic element of potential alliance as you amass power. Eventually, your goal is to rule all the world's realms, so you'll have to do some battle for that; no need to let your fighting chops get totally rusty, right? Of course, the game will sport multiplay and Net-play capability, although I-Magic is still working out save-game options, which—given the scope and time you'll need to mount a full campaign—would seem necessary.

Seven Kingdoms should be on shelves in time for the Christmas buying season. While there'll be no lack of real-time strategy choices on the Wal-Mart shelves, they'll all ultimately concentrate on the fighting. I-Magic has certainly made a reputation on military-based games, and in some ways this one is no exception. But, for once, its ambition seems a little bit different.

SEVEN KINGDOMS

PUBLISHER:	Interactive Magic
WEB:	www.imagicgames.com
AVAILABLE:	November 1997

Can you change the course of history?

Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far

By Barry Brenesal

Operation Market Garden was a bitter inferno of missed opportunities, miscomprehensions, and personality conflicts for the Allied forces of World War II. Montgomery's elaborate, overly optimistic plan to strike Berlin directly via Holland fell one bridge short of securing the needed route, hence the title by which it's been known ever since: A Bridge Too Far. But could its many fiercely fought battles have been won with properly timed airdrops and logistical support? Microsoft's Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far gives you a chance to find out.



Use the Battlemaker module to create your own scenarios, then share them with friends.

We found out ourselves by sampling a preview copy in late beta. The results were extremely impressive in every way. Take a deep breath: You can play just a single battle between Allied and Axis troops—40 men in deadly confrontation contesting a barn or a turn in the road—or you can lead anything up to and including the Grand Campaign, an epic undertaking on three simultaneous, geographically separated fronts in multiple combat operations.

In terms of realism, CC2 is extraordinary in its troops' reactive scope. They rest, move, crawl, sneak, lay down suppressive fire, snipe automatically at enemy leaders, attempt to gain line of sight on enemy troops in real time, and even refuse your commands if their morale and ammunition are low. They move across 16-bit, SVGA maps (which aren't tile-based), adding to the illusion of reality.



Use the Troop Monitor to keep tabs on what each of your men is doing and how he feels.

There's also a new strategic element to Close Combat 2. Instead of simply allocating troops provided at the beginning of a battle, you can now customize your fighting force by drawing from a limited number of reserve units. Play a series of battles in the form of a campaign, and your damage and reserves carry across.

Close Combat 2's combat model is much improved over the original's as well. Unit performance is more distinctive: snipers are more accurate, for instance. Unit AI (which I had problems with in the first Close Combat) is now top-notch. A new Team Monitor box shows the status of all units in a troop at once. Buildings now have roofs, and you can't see inside them until you're up close. The structures also provide elevation benefits for the troops inside.

While the original Close Combat was a very linear game that forced the Allies to push forward, its successor allows for strategic retreats to mimic the ebb and flow of battle. You may wish to cut your losses on a specific objective and work around it, or draw your enemy into an overextended front. If so, Close Combat 2 lets you pull your people off the playing field so that they will be available for the next battle. Of course, they'll retain all previously sustained damage when they show up for the next fight in the campaign.



Sixteen-bit SVGA nontiled maps lend an air of realism.

A Battlemaker module allows you to customize your own battles for quick trial runs (very useful, given the depth of this game) or what-if scenarios. You can determine the victory conditions, initial forces on both sides, deployments and reserves—then bring in a friend and fashion your own slice of epic history over a LAN, null modem, or on the Microsoft Internet Gaming Zone.

With its wealth of realistic detail, sensible interface, attractive visuals, and breadth of vision, Close Combat 2: A Bridge Too Far makes a fair bid toward becoming one of the most popular wargames of this holiday season.



Carefully select reserve forces for your next battle.

CLOSE COMBAT 2

DEVELOPER:	Atomic Games
PUBLISHER:	Microsoft
WEB:	www.microsoft.com
AVAILABLE:	October 1997

GAME OF THE MONTH



Shadow Warrior

3D Realms crosses the lines of propriety—again

By Steve Klett

You want to wash Wang? Or do you want to watch Wang wash Wang?"

Meet Lo Wang, the "hero" of 3D Realms' latest—and last—first-person shooter based on the Build engine.

As you may have guessed from Wang's comments, the boys down in Texas are up to the sophomoric hijinks you'd expect after playing their last title, Duke Nukem 3D.

So the usual 3D Realms rules apply: Parents—don't let your children near this game. And gamers easily offended by off-color jokes and non-politically correct game design should stick to Myst.

Shadow Warrior (SW) is full of tongue-in-cheek, slapstick humor that'll have you rolling your eyes and groaning as often as it makes you laugh. And yes, it's got its share of lightly clad females for whom Lo Wang has a stable of tasteless pick-up lines. And yes, you can shoot them like you could in Duke (only this time, they may shoot back—or even help your cause).

Here's a typical exchange: Our hero comes across a comely young female drawn in classic anime style (of course) in a bikini (of course) sitting innocently on a bed (of course).

Lo Wang: "Hey Baby, you in bed...is there room for two?"

Babe: "I don't think my mother would approve."

Well, she's right about that. Mr. Lo Wang is an insensitive male chauvinist who gives new meaning to the word "pig." And, because he's an Asian character, depicting him in such a manner has raised the racism debate. For this reviewer, that wasn't an issue. If anything, I'd argue that Duke should've been just as offensive to the masses.

But enough of that. SW is all about fun. It's intentionally over the top. It's intentionally offensive. And all the bad jokes and puns are intentional as well. If you're a gamer and a fan of classic martial-arts B-movies—or late-night cable movies in general—you'll most likely enjoy SW.



Lo Wang takes one of several breaks during the action. Find this woman in the Floating Fortress and she'll help you out.



As promised, the enemies are smart enough to take cover in a firefight (though here they choose flammable barrels!).

Why? How can 3D Realms get away with what it gets away with? It's simple, really: game design. The level design in SW is simply fan-bloody-tastic: Hara-Kiri Harbor (L7) and Floating Fortress (L18) are my personal favorites. I simply couldn't wait to see the next gag, puzzle, or enemy lurking around the corner.

3D Realms has mastered the concept of interactive, realistic environments—nearly every light, plant, computer, coffee cup, and pane of glass is breakable. Nearly every switch is switchable—and yes, the toilets even flush. And along the way, Lo Wang always has something to say—it's almost always cheesy, but you'll laugh nonetheless.

It's a fitting end-of-the-line for the Build engine—3D Realms really pushes it to its limits, so it'll go out in a blaze of glory. (Games from other companies may still crop up based on the Build engine, but 3D Realms has turned to Quake for its next game—Duke Nukem Forever—and beyond that, its own Prey engine.)

If Duke was 2.5D, SW is 2.75D. You'll find rooms above rooms (though, admittedly, not very expansive ones) in many levels, true bridges, catwalks, and beams, and many more operating devices such as boats, gun turrets, bulldozers, and tanks (all of which you can control). There are also cool new level effects, including but not limited to erupting volcanoes, collapsing tunnels, quakes, crashing airplanes, fog, reflective textures (used very sparingly), and translucent water. Whew! Furthermore, the sheer number of massive explosions and special effects puts Duke Nukem to shame, and that's saying a great deal.

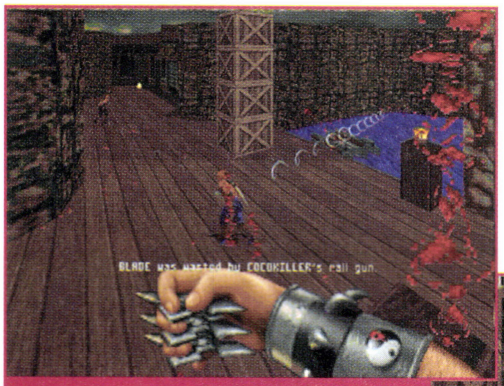


Spurt, spurt, spurt...



There are three bosses to beat—and none of them are easy.

The gameplay style is almost exactly like Duke's, and you have access to the same control options and setup routine. But, of course, Lo Wang has new toys to play with in the weapons department. Everyone's



The Ripper Heart is deadly in a deathmatch.

throw at enemies or affix to walls for a booby-trap.

Next to the nuke, the Ripper Heart is probably the most lethal weapon in the game: squeeze it, and a Railgun-wielding Lo Wang double appears and takes out all comers with amazing efficiency (for a limited amount of time, of course). And talking about the Railgun in the upcoming Quake 2, but SW has one now—and it's deadly. Pinpoint accuracy is required, but its range is virtually unlimited. One good hit, and it's good night.



Set 'em ablaze with the Guardian Head. Ouch!

There are 11 weapons: a few have secondary, or even tertiary firing effects, depending on the ammo you've picked up. The Missile Launcher, for instance, fires standard missiles, heat-seeking missiles, and a nuke (run for cover!). And the Guardian Head (an enemy head that's essentially a flamethrower) has different effects, based on how much ammo you've got.

Then you have single-handed and double-fisted Uzi-firing, and the Riot Gun has single- and rapid-fire options (the latter's extremely deadly at close range, but your aim had better be good). Plus, there are Caltrops to drop and sting the feet of enemies, Gas Bombs to unleash, and, best of all, Sticky Bombs: spiked proximity mines that you can the old standby ninja sword and shuriken are not to be overlooked in a pinch.

There's not much bad to say about SW, other than the off-color humor and somewhat dated game engine, which we've covered. More baddies would have been nice—it seems like you're always fighting the same half-dozen or so henchmen. On the other hand, there are three tough-as-nails bosses to beat, and overall, the single-player game is far more challenging than Duke's.

The artwork isn't as crisp and compelling as Duke's, though. It seems flat—muddy in comparison. And technofreaks hung up on only playing "true 3D engines" will find much to quibble about. (3D Realms does plan to release a patch for 3Dfx-based accelerator cards, however.)



Looks like a scene from a Jackie Chan movie. The third-person perspective is useful when you're in any of the vehicles.

Oh, did we forget the story? SW's plot is simple (and not its strength): You're Lo Wang, chasing some unknown baddie known only as "Zilla" through the course of the game's 24 levels (four shareware and 20 registered; you also get four quality deathmatch-only levels). The game ends when you find and "kill" Zilla; the last level is awesome!

And, as in most kung fu movies, let's just say there's room left for a sequel—and I really hope there is one. I've got to go now, cuz "I think my dinghy's hanging out..."

SAMURAI SECRETS

There are two secret levels in the registered version of Shadow Warrior. If you want to know how to find 'em, read on.

The first is Shanghai Shipwreck, and you'll find the exit for it on Raiders of the Lost Wang. Look for a painting in a small room with a doorway that leads to a long set of stairs. If you look closely, you'll find a switch on the wall in the corner. Press it. The painting rises to reveal the secret exit—but you won't be able to get to it yet. At the end of the level, look for some vines on the wall by a waterfall. Climb them to find another switch. Flip it, go back to the room with the painting, and you'll be able to access the secret level.

The second secret level is Auto Maul; you get to it from the Unfriendly Skies level. Get in the elevator, hit the switch to make it go down, and then back out and jump on top of the elevator (you have to be very quick). Look for a switch that lifts you up to a shaft that leads to the exit.



Don't miss the switch.



This elevator leads to Auto Maul.

SHADOW WARRIOR

GAMEPLAY:	B+
GETTING STARTED:	A
GRAPHICS:	C+
SOUND CHECK:	A-
OVERALL	B+
MULTIPLAYER:	A-

Even more offensive—and fun—than Duke 3D.

DEVELOPER:	3D Realms
PUBLISHER:	GT Interactive 800-621-4847
WEB:	www.3drealms.com
PLATFORM:	DOS/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 16MB RAM, 45MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P133, 32MB RAM
STREET PRICE:	$40

TIPS ▼ Nukes: When someone fires a nuke at you in a wide-open area, run straight at them as fast as you can and sidestep it. If you react quickly enough, you'll be safe and may surprise your attacker. You can also use the nuke quite effectively in tight confines, such as a hallway. Just make sure you duck behind something solid to shield yourself. You can survive very, very close to ground zero. ▼ Save the Ripper Heart for the toughest enemies—it's especially effective against some of the bosses. ▼ Use the nuke or heat-seeking missile to take out lame snipers in multiplay. ▼ The sword is the best weapon for point-blank fighting. ▼ The key to defeating the bosses is to never, ever stop moving.

A GOOD *7TH LEGION* RECRUIT ALWAYS SALUTES HIS VICTIM.





SCREAM through combat strategy and savor every ***GUT-WRENCHING*** moment of annihilating your enemy. With rage in your veins and ***ASSASSINATION*** on the brain, be prepared to command this *7th Legion*™ battalion in the ultimate ***UNTAMED DEATH FEST.*** Because once you're in–it's all about balls-to-the-wall real-time combat action, where "paying your respects" is done with a dignified ***SINGLE FINGER SALUTE.***

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

EPIC MEGAGAMES



MICROPROSE
www.microprose.com

7TH LEGION™

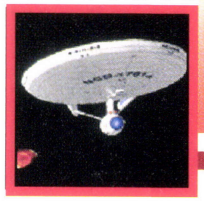
AVAILABLE ON WINDOWS 95. VISIT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER OR CALL: 1.800.695.GAME 24 HOURS (U.S. AND CANADA)

© 1997 MicroProse, Inc. All rights reserved. 7th Legion is a trademark of Epic MegaGames, Inc. MicroProse is a registered trademark of MicroProse, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

ATTITUDE. *Your voracious band of ruthless mercenaries gets smarter as they collect mutilated bodies for cold hard cash.*

ANARCHY. *Wage war with up to 6 legions via modem, LAN or Internet–then deploy action element cards to wreak havoc on enemies.*

ACTION. *MMX technology delivers feverish, finger-blistering combat with action faster than any other real-time strategy game.*



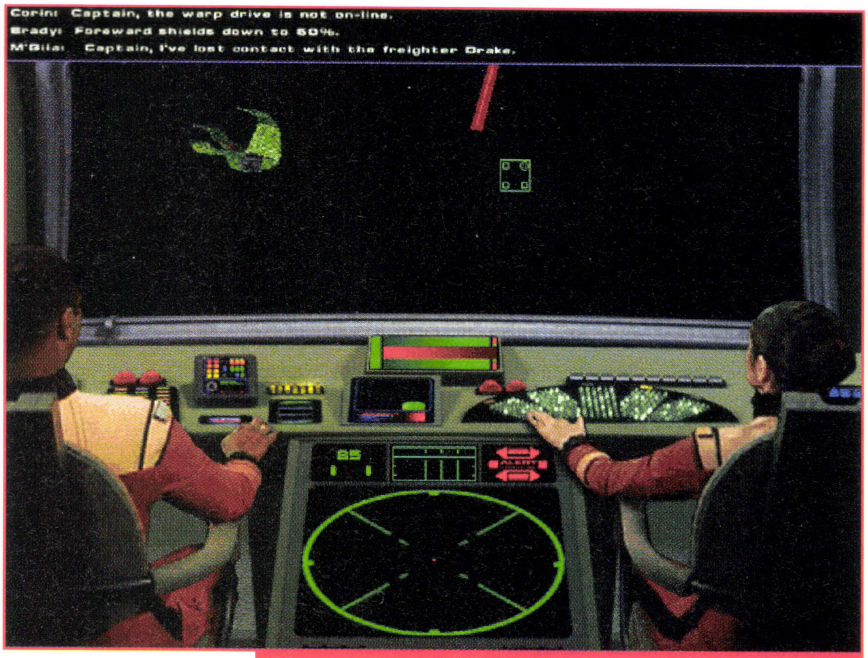
Star Trek: Starfleet Academy

By Don St. John

PC GAMES A LIST

For years—decades, maybe—you've imagined yourself warping to the future and taking command of a Starfleet vessel. What could be cooler for a Trekker? So the day arrives, and you actually get to handle a ship...and it's a *bitch*.

Welcome to Starfleet Academy—not the fictional construct in San Francisco's Presidio, but the crisp, entrancing new game from Interplay. Let's get the main point out of the way right off the bat: Starfleet Academy succeeds better than any previous *Trek* game at capturing the feel of the show and of the full *Trek* experience. Set in the 23rd century as seen in the first six feature films, this game achieves its primary mission—to make you actually feel like a dumb, green command-candidate who might somehow manage to get through simulator missions to command a ship. It's instant addiction.



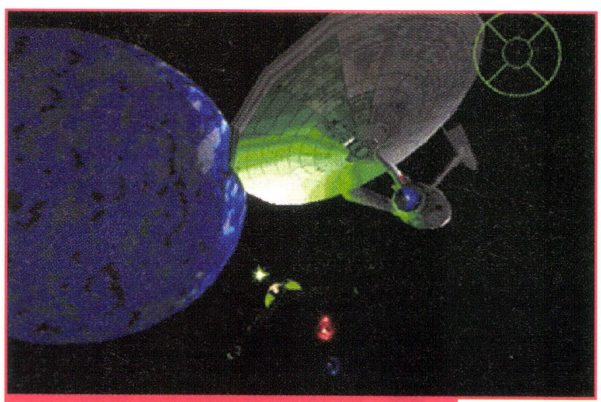
Hey, Klingons can fly upside down! Or is it us stupid cadets?

Although all *Trek* games strive for a certain authenticity (watched over by the praetors at Paramount Pictures, who must issue their imprimatur on any *Trek* product), Starfleet doesn't have

A fantastic trip to the stars

to convince you of anything. Good animation, superb sound, and production values that use many of the TV show's elements give you the sense that you're plunked down in front of your set. The only thing you'll find jarring is the hull breach you cause the first time you fly too close to a planet. You'll find the sound particularly impressive; if you have a Dolby Surround option in your sound card, here's one game that lets you take full advantage of it. Even if you don't, the panning stereo effects and simulated 3D are above-average, and an upcoming A3D patch will boost that even more for owners of Monster 3D Sound and other A3D-enabled cards.

Starfleet Academy mixes cut-scenes in full-motion video with the guts of the game, the animated space simulations where you figure out how to handle your ship, do battle, and think your way through the tasks—and make no mistake, thinking *will* be required. Meanwhile, fans of the Wing Commanders, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighters, and other space-based fly-and-shooters won't be disappointed with the battle quotient: get an enemy on your six, and brainpower goes out the window in favor of reaction and pure dogfighting. You can also set up your own missions, with up to eight ships flying at once in a preset planetary system. What's particularly cool about this is the ability to both try out different ships and to set up teams, with other ships available to you as wingmen.



The *Enterprise* is yours to fly to Orion or crash on an asteroid.

From the first training mission, the tasks aren't easy at all, and each new one challenges your ability to react quickly to battle situations and to think your way through the mission directives. There are a fair number of curveballs thrown at you too: typical is the order in the second mission to capture and destroy the buoy snatched by the stolen freighter *Khyzag*. Follow that command, and you'll flunk the mission (for a reason related to the initial orders—listen closely).



Yes, those are old-style Romulan Birds of Prey.

Later missions run you, of course, into the regular complement of baddies—to wit, the Klingons and Romulans. Costumes and situations date to the movie-era *Enterprise* 1701-A time frame, with the typical *Trek* continuity preserved. You'd almost expect Khan to rear his cheesy head.

In all of the 20-plus missions, reaction time will be key, and that means mastering the controls. Unless you want to fry your brain, use a joystick:



you'll have enough keyboard controls to deal with without subbing in the numeric keypad for flying. Keys break down into the standard three categories: flight controls, targeting and weapons, and command and control. You won't want to ignore that last one, either—among the quick decisions you'll have to make will be dealing with energy allocation to critical areas of your ship, as well as damage control. Take a few hits, and you're faced with some choices: More power to the shields? How long can you get away with reduced life-support? When will you need that warp drive? You've seen those questions pop up in hundreds of episodes, and Starfleet does a fantastic job of making them real and immediate in the game.

The cut-scenes, by the way, aren't just filler. One of the criteria for making your way through the game is how well you handle your crew, and you'll see their interactions happen here. They're not all pleasant, either: animosity makes itself felt from the first Academy-bar gathering, and you need to defuse tensions without losing your grip on them. If the crew rating goes down—you'll find it in the cadet quarters—it'll have ramifications later in crucial situations. This is also where you see Kirk, Sulu, and Chekov, played by William Shatner, George Takei, and Walter Koenig under the continuing terms of the Full Employment Act for Aging *Trek* Actors. (Hearing Shatner intone stuff like "Never forget...risk is your business" is its usual unintended giggle.) More often, you'll deal with your nemesis, Academy commandant Aex Rotherot, who's well played by Chris Weeks. When you screw up, it's Rotherot who'll sneeringly dress you down for your plebe mistakes. Funny how you feel like a plebe when he does so.

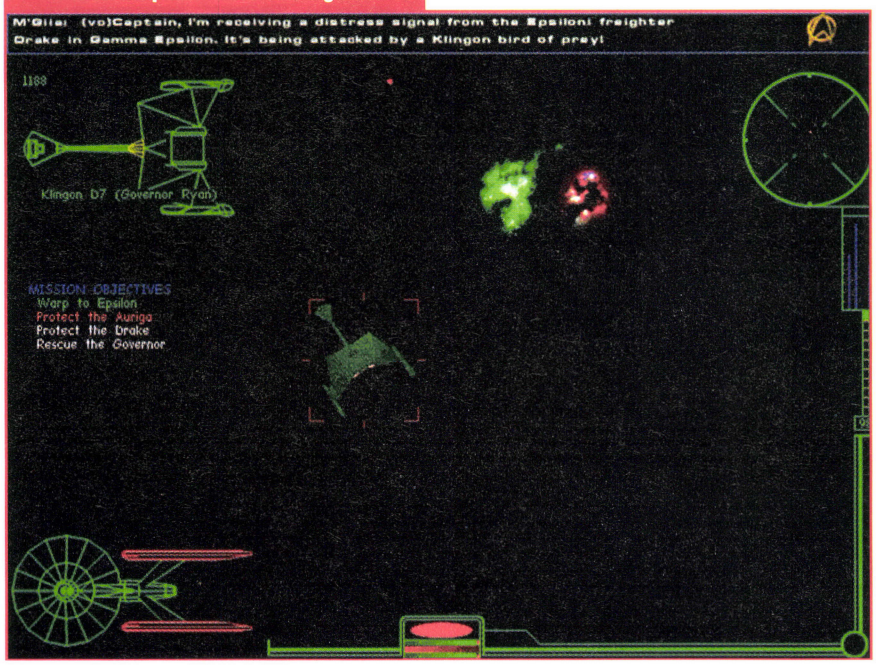


Not him again!

Multiplay is available in IPX, modem, or direct-connection capability, and it throws you into classic space-sim territory. The games themselves can take several modes, ranging from the zoom-around-and-blast-away Dogfight, where you fight with small-to-regular ships, to Siege, where you blast away in big ships. In these scenarios, you can use Klingon, Romulan, and even Tholian craft and weapons, with the various capabilities they possess. (You'll love cloaking as a Klingon or Romulan to sneak up on your Federation opponents.) Net Profit turns the battle idea on its head, setting up instead an economic sim where you take control of a space freighter, seek contracts, and make enough bucks to retire comfortably.

Starfleet Academy isn't quite perfect: The learning curve is steep, mastering the hot-keys takes a lot of study and practice, and it's a serious hard-disk hog at 180MB. I had to clear off several games to get the installation routine to recognize my drive. Once I started playing, though, I didn't miss a single one of 'em...and that's the mark of a truly superb game. The integration in Starfleet Academy of action, simulation, and adventure elements is balanced and seamless, and the production values are entirely up to snuff. Play it: It goes where no *Trek* game has gone before.

The Klingon K'T'Inga battlecarrier, the most beautiful spacecraft ever designed.



STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY

GAMEPLAY: A
GETTING STARTED: B+
GRAPHICS: A-
SOUND CHECK: A+

A OVERALL

MULTIPLAYER: A-

Warps past any previous *Trek* game.

PUBLISHER:	Interplay 800-468-3775
WEB:	www.interplay.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD/Mac CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 180MB HD, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	joystick, Dolby Surround–compatible sound card
STREET PRICE:	$60

TIPS ▼ Learn the hot-keys as quickly as possible. You won't have time to run around the various bridge stations to perform functions. ▼ If the situation permits, take a quick run through all your targets (by pressing the + key on your keypad) to plot them on your radar. Toggle back to wide radar with the R key when you do this. ▼ Listen closely to your orders: there are lots of curveballs. (These are training missions, after all; they're grading you.) ▼ If you're in doubt about whether to fully take your enemy out, don't; power down to disabling phasers instead with the F key. You can always ramp up again if needed. ▼ Use photon torpedoes sparingly: you're frequently so close to enemies when you fire them that you'll take damage as well. ▼ In multiplay, play as Klingon or Romulan to get the cloaking device. You lose weapons while you're cloaked, of course, but the stealth factor more than makes up for that.

THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE LIES 3,700 YEARS IN THE PAST.



THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT® 3 LEGACY OF TIME™

Your mission: Embark on a journey of discovery paramount to earth's survival.
Your destination: The lost worlds of Shangri-La, El Dorado and Atlantis.
Your vehicle: *Legacy of Time*, a new CD-ROM adventure coming in December.

RED ORB entertainment

PRESTO STUDIOS

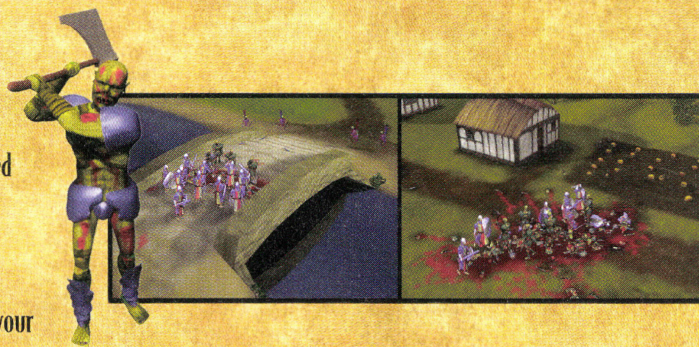
www.JourneymanProject3.com

The Journeyman Project and Presto Studios are registered trademarks of Presto Studios, Inc. Legacy of Time and Red Orb Entertainment are trademarks of Broderbund Software, Inc.

Myth Sports A 3D Engi
Renders Other Strat



© 1997 Bungie Software Products Corporation. Myth: The Fallen Lords is a trademark of Bungie Software Products Corporation.



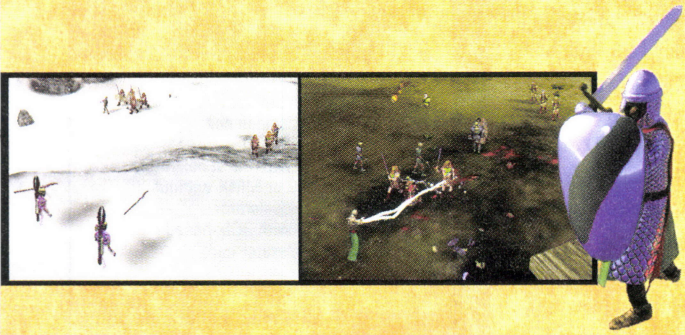
Now you can go hand-to-hand with the enemy on a smoothly rolling 3D landscape the way you've always imagined. The environment of Myth: The Fallen Lords is so real that every bloody limb, every scattered sword, every unexploded charge tossed by a ground-rippling explosion remains a live element ready to be seized and used by or against you. Not limited to a simple overhead view, you'll rotate around the heads of your troops, follow the arc of a burning arrow and zoom in on the slaughter.

BUNGIE®

Get an eyeful of stunning detail: reflections in the water, lightning frying the enemy to cinders, smoking craters ringed with the heads of the inept and every ounce of blood remaining on the scarred battlefield.

ne So Advanced It Even egy Games Obsolete.





But don't stare too long. Learn the art of war and the importance of physics as you move fast to seize the high ground where the archers have greater range and pyromaniac dwarves can shower targets with explosives.

Multiplayer games include classic scenarios like King of the Hill and Capture the Flag, and uniquely challenging variants like Assassin and Steal the Bacon, even in teams! Play over the Internet for free using bungie.net or turn your local network into your own personal war zone.

So call 800-295-0060 or surf to www.bungie.com for the only strategy game where "uphill battle" is more than a figure of speech.

myth
THE FALLEN LORDS



Terracide

By Shane Mooney

Most people would define pressure as, say, attempting to pilot a tailspinning airplane, or handling public relations for O.J. Simpson. But you don't know the meaning of pressure until you're the only person standing between a colony of mutated biomechanical humans and our planet Earth. This is what it all boils down to in Terracide, an action shooter intent on making you forget all about Descent.

It's all up to you

Discontent with what futuristic life has to offer, colonists set out to boldly go where no one has gone before, only to find out why. The greener grass actually turns out to be growing on the harshest of landscapes: worlds that force the technologically advanced humans to adapt or die. Blending biology with technology, they evolve into biotech mutants with an attitude, hell-bent on taking over our little patch of paradise we call Earth.

What's Earth to do? Send its millions of armed forces against the alien armada? Blitzkrieg the entire fleet with its vast nuclear arsenal before it has a chance to enter our atmosphere? No, that'd be too simple. This is where "the-fate-of-the-free-world-rests-in-your-hands" part comes in. You, and only you, must take out the entire civilization.

Thankfully, it ain't just you and an F-16. The Earth has built a super-secret ship capable of single-handedly obliterating an alien attack, albeit one ship at a time. Lacking the foresight necessary to build an entire fleet of these, Earth plops you into this bad boy with a handshake and a resounding "Win one for the world!"

At first glance, you might think that this is just another Descent; but therein lies your youthful naïveté. As in Descent, you get to fly through twisted levels of corridors and air ducts, but Terracide's got 20 such levels, distributed among seven ships—in contrast to Descent's single ship. You get to fly around space as well, taking out the massive invading ships' defenses.



Terracide easily blows Descent (as well as your enemies) away.

An added plus to Terracide is that you have to deal with differing objectives, which involves flipping switches and blowing up a variety of things. And the enemies don't just sit there for target practice: they like to zoom around corners and watch you chase them, just so they can attack from behind. Some of the more advanced ones like to dance around the screen and take shots at you to the point of total frustration (sometimes it gets a bit *too* frustrating—and a tad repetitious).



But wait—it gets better. This is from the same company that brought you the 3Dfx world of Lara Croft, so it shouldn't be any surprise that Terracide is a veritable feast for the senses. 3D card owners will be happy to know that this game takes advantage of just about every feature your card boasts: fogging, dynamic lighting, translucency, alpha blending, reflection mapping, and other propeller-head terms that'll impress your friends and family.

As for sound, Terracide employs Qsound positional audio technology, ambient sound effects to help with the game's atmosphere, and a full CD audio soundtrack.

These qualities, coupled with multiplayer-specific games like Co-op, Capture the Flag, and the ever-popular Deathmatch (up to 16 players can play over a LAN), make for an excellent game. Terracide isn't just a step up from Descent—it's a whole flight of stairs better.

Using nearly every feature of a 3D card, Terracide is one of the best-looking action games of the year.



TERRACIDE

GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS:	A
SOUND CHECK:	A-
MULTIPLAYER:	B

B+ OVERALL

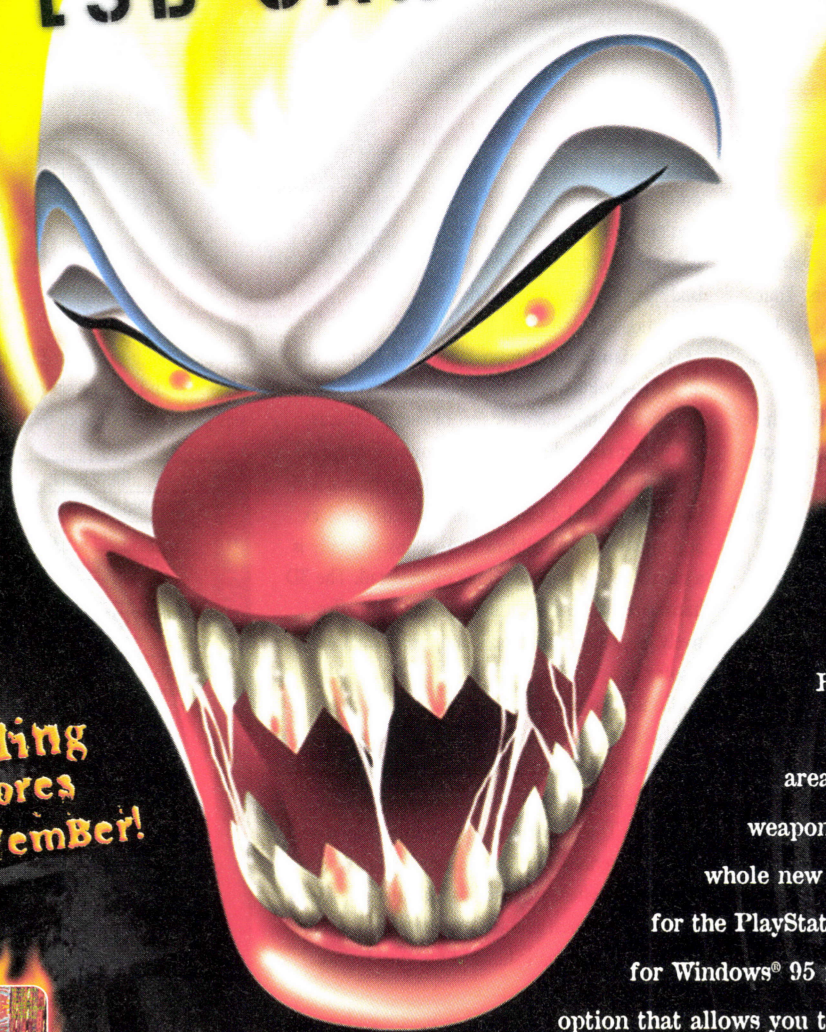
If you lost sleep playing Descent, stock up on No-Doz: Terracide does Descent better than Descent.

DEVELOPER:	Simis
PUBLISHER:	Eidos Interactive
WEB:	www.eidos.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90 with 3D accelerator, P150 or MMX without 3D accelerator
RECOMMENDED:	P90 with 3Dfx-based accelerator card
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS ▼ Always check your back: enemies like to sneak up on you. ▼ Careful when blowing around corners; there may be someone waiting for you. ▼ Be on your toes when you're in a firefight and your opponent suddenly takes off. He's usually trying to lead you into a booby trap.

INSANE

[3D CAR COMBAT]



Smashing into Stores This November!

The most twisted driving and shooting game ever created just packed its bags and hit the road — Paris, New York, Hong Kong, Antarctica, and beyond. With eight new levels in all, hidden areas, world landmarks to destroy, new weapons and killer combo-attacks — it's a whole new world to blow away! A monster hit for the PlayStation™ game console, Twisted Metal 2 for Windows® 95 is a direct port with a network play option that allows you to annihilate up to 8 friends in a single match. Also compatible with all Direct3D video accelerators.

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD ROM

Get ready. Get twisted. Drive Angry.







Sony Interactive Studios America
PlayStation is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Twisted Metal and Drive Angry are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Windows 95 and Microsoft are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.
©1997 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

TWISTED METAL 2™



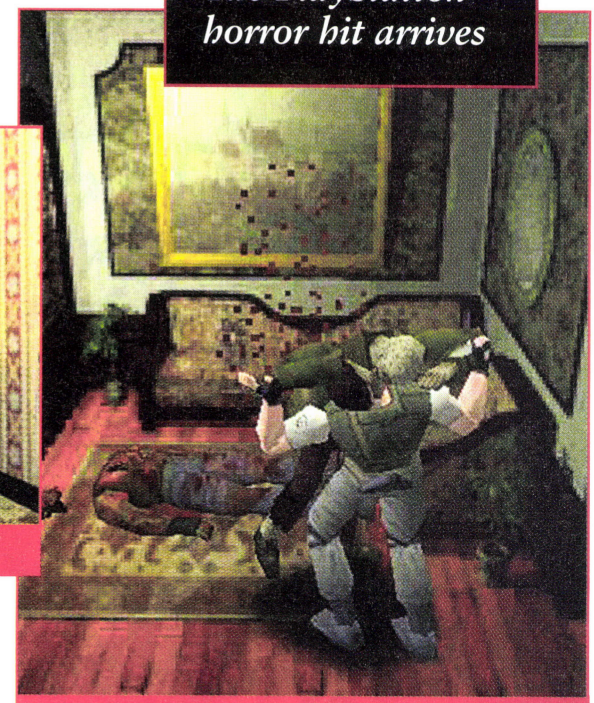
Resident Evil

The PlayStation horror hit arrives

By Peter Olafson



Down, Cujo! Good boy...



A ghoul puts the bite on Chris.

Resident Evil is a genuine rarity—a console port that goes one better than the original. Imagine an action-oriented Alone in the Dark designed for 3D accelerator cards, and you'll have a good idea of what to expect. On my Righteous 3D 3Dfx-based card, this supremely gory third-person adventure—a conversion of Capcom's extremely popular PlayStation game—looks bloody fantastic.

You're a member of a commando squad sent in to track down...er, the *other* commando squad investigating a string of cannibalistic murders. Your team is attacked by something with lots of teeth and an unprecedented gift for redistributing blood. A handful of survivors retreat into a large mansion—out of the proverbial frying pan... The whole place is just crawling with zombies who want nothing better than to attach themselves to your neck.

Then there's the Snake. If you're spooked by the first zombie—who interrupts his grisly meal and stares out of the screen at you with dead, hungry eyes—the Snake will give you nightmares.



Hmm...who put that map there?

It's one of many Resident pleasures. If you have the stomach for this horror-movie thing, you'll enjoy the pleasantly simple controls, the basic puzzles, the most realistic-looking player characters yet, and the ability to play as male and female commandos (their games are somewhat different: he's on his own, she has a colleague, and they enter the game with different weapons). And if you're one of those folks who hankers to blow off individual body parts, yeah, you can do that, too.

The mansion and its environs—90-plus rooms, all told—look superb. Computer-game haunted houses too often have the feel of cheap '60s cartoons that reuse the same background footage ad infinitum; they're just regular dungeon mazes with bookshelves and divans in lieu of torture devices and mossy stone. Resident Evil's mansion really is a mansion, and it's been done up in detail. The 3D hardware acceleration (which is required) effectively gives it a coat of wax and a rubdown with a soft rag.

Console-to-computer translations have traditionally been fraught with problems, but I'm principally impressed with how many things Resident Evil does right. The music is just about perfect in its scary simplicity. The saved-game mechanism—you're restricted to certain locations—is much more sensible than the anywhere/anytime business that prevails in most action games, as is the modestly sized inventory and the automatic filing of documents you discover in your killing spree.

That said, the game could've been even better. The live-action intro is just cheesy. So is the spurting-blood effect. The environment doesn't quite feel of one piece: whenever you enter or leave a room, a cut-scene animation kicks in, and this gets tired in a hurry. The voice-acting is often embarrassing and the writing primitive to awkward—probably because Resident Evil was a translation of a Japanese PSX game.

But when the disembodied head hits the fan, it's mainly the good stuff that I remember, and there's enough of it that I'll probably still be playing—and still be spooked—when this review sees print. That's good. That's very good.

RESIDENT EVIL

GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS:	B+
SOUND CHECK:	B

B OVERALL

MULTIPLAYER: N/A

Ignore the dialogue and open the door: they're waiting...

DEVELOPER:	Capcom
PUBLISHER:	VIE 800-874-4607
WEB:	www.vie.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 100MB HD, 4x CD-ROM drive, either a Matrox Mystique, Diamond Monster 3D, Orchid Righteous, Creative Total 3D, Creative 3D Blaster, Canopus Total 3D, or Intergraph Intense 3D
RECOMMENDED:	P166, 32MB RAM, joypad
STREET PRICE:	$53

TIPS ▼ Distance is the best strategy. Don't let yourself be surrounded. ▼ Dead isn't always dead. Make sure a zombie's crashed before you leave it behind (or try to walk over it). ▼ The eye of the tiger can be found on the balcony above the dining room. To get it, push the statue to the break in the railing, then push it over the edge. ▼ Use the lighter to start a fireplace blaze in the second-floor northeastern room, and you'll be rewarded with a map. ▼ Don't try to take on the Snake until you've found the bazooka. Don't worry about being poisoned in the process; the key is simply outlasting it. ▼ Just for fun, disobey orders—go ahead and open the front door.

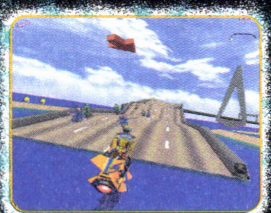
BRUTAL

[ALL-TERRAIN RACING]

BlaZiNg
iNto Stores
This NoVemBer!







KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

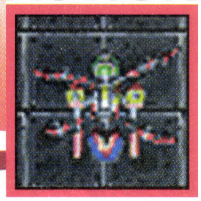
PC CD ROM

These are the most treacherous motorcraft courses ever created. Test your stomach on a vehicle equal parts motocross bike and rocket as you scream across sun-drenched sea courses, tree-choked bayou swamps, and snow-covered slopes. TruePhysics™ 3D technology brings every whip turn and spin into gut-wrenching reality. A triumph for the PlayStation™ game console, Jet Moto for Windows® 95 features a network play option that enables you to race up to 20 friends simultaneously. Also compatible with all Direct3D video accelerators. Ride it. Feel it. Split some air.

Sony Interactive Studios America

PlayStation is trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Jet Moto, TruePhysics are of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. Windows 95 and Microsoft are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. ©1997 Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

Jet Moto™



Machine Hunter

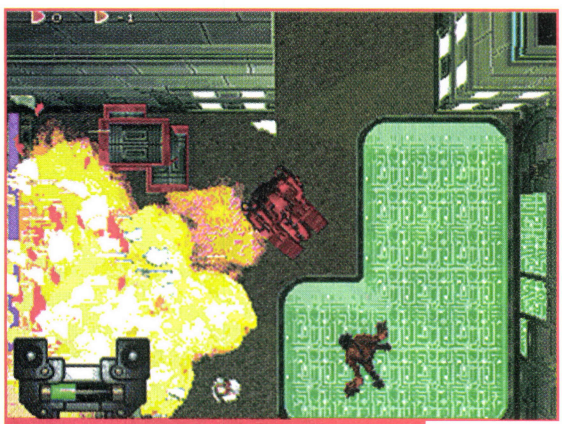
We can rebuild him—we have the technology

By Don St. John

Every year in San Francisco, lots of technonerds get together with self-built robots for a little tournament called Robot Wars. Basically, their contraptions are built for one purpose—kicking the poop out of the other guy's machine until it won't work anymore. The rules are simple: last robot standing wins.

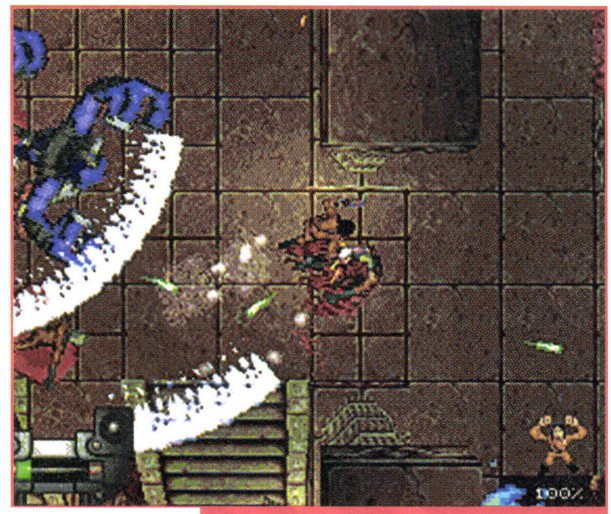
For all of us nontechnonerds who don't have the brainpower to devise a real robot, MGM Interactive has the answer: Machine Hunter. This top-down shooter, developed by European firm Eurocom, starts you off as a human. Then you encounter one of the weirder premises I've heard in a while: If you can take down an enemy robot (using your puny sidearms) enough that it powers down, you can assume its body as your own. Morph, indeed.

In practice, it's kinda cool—and necessary, since you'll need the amped-up firepower the bigger robots possess to get through your 16 missions. A more-or-less unnecessary backstory frames these: We've colonized Mars (an old idea, but hey, give the developers credit for timeliness) in 2034 for the inevitable mining colonies. You've got robots with simplistic AI doing the grunt work, and the equally inevitable aliens swoop in, take over your droids, and turn them into murderous mechanical freaks. Your task is to grab the aliens' hostages and take out all the robots. Fire when ready.



Opponent got you outgunned? Shoot the power installations near him; the resulting explosion will hurt him badly.

The action is arcade-style (no accident—this heads simultaneously for the Sony PlayStation), and you play either via keyboard or a recommended joypad. There's no joystick support, which is unfortunate, given the difficult numeric-pad keyboard settings for directional firing—making play tricky for right-handers. Controls aren't customizable, meaning you either master the number pad or settle for control-button, one-directional firing at enemies. Also, if you're accustomed to using your left/right arrows for turning in other shooters, be warned—those are directionals here. You'll do some spinning around until you settle into the movement grooves.



In this game, crabs have *you* for dinner.

Other aspects are more customizable, notably the difficulty levels: Machine Hunter offers five, ranging from Easy to Impossible. Your strategy will change accordingly: on easier settings, you can go face to face more often with robots, blasting away in a clinch until you can assimilate the bugger. Harder levels demand more cover and strafing, and that isn't always easy in this game's occasionally wide plazas. The maze-like levels offer lots of challenges—finding your way to power-ups, figuring out how to maneuver blocked pathways, and dodging an increasingly strong number of droids and crablike aliens.

Machine Hunter isn't brain surgery; you shoot everything that moves and some things that don't (you have to blow out walls to make necessary pathways). Given that and the hostage-rescue aspect, it's quite reminiscent of Die Hard Trilogy in its arcade-style fun. The top-down perspective is fairly easy to get used to, if not quite as nimble as the same perspective in Red Orb's upcoming Take No Prisoners.

The graphics certainly aren't killer: Although the environment textures are fine, the characters are cartoony, particularly the arm-waving hostages. Eurocom clearly concentrated more on gameplay speed and the excellent multilevel design. Since this game doesn't demand much in the way of eye candy, that's basically OK. Multiplay with as many as eight is fun, especially because you can experience the various types of robots more quickly, but the levels are really too big for two- or three-player combat.

For a concept that's pretty old (the game's essentially inspired by the Commodore 64 classic PowerDroid) Machine Hunter manages to be a lot of fun. I certainly hadn't expected to get too addicted to it, but there's something quite satisfying about that flash as you morph into another robot. And let's face it—nobody's ever really 100 percent happy with their body, right?

MACHINE HUNTER

GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS:	C
SOUND CHECK:	B-
OVERALL	**B-**
MULTIPLAYER:	**B**

Be a droid, shoot other droids. Fun.

DEVELOPER:	Eurocom
PUBLISHER:	MGM Interactive 310-449-3000
WEB:	www.machinehunter.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 8MB RAM, 25MB HD, 256-color graphics, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	16MB RAM, 155MB HD
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS ▼ On easy settings, go right for your opponent; staying close will limit its ability to damage you, and you can power up energy losses after you morph. ▼ Shoot everything, including walls. Ammo is not a problem. ▼ In multiplay, get as high as you can, then drop down to your opponent's level and start firing. ▼ Once you've got the droid you want in MPG (the mechs are best), blow up other droid units so your opponent can't morph into them.



WarHeads

By Bob Lindstrom

PC GAMES A LIST

Here's one of the sleepers of the year. This surprise comes out of nowhere from Ionos, a new company whose first claim to fame is that it's sharing royalties with its affiliates at the incredible ratio of 50/50. (Many royalty agreements with publishers are 15/85. Guess who gets the big part?)

But you don't care about developers getting rich; you just want to blow stuff up and break things in cyberspace. And whether you're playing WarHeads against the solid computer AI or against humans on the Internet, this nifty game lets you blow stuff up "real good."

You're piloting a spacecraft in an environment of planets that are randomly generated with each new round. Playing against up to 10 computer or human opponents, you purchase blasters from a selection of 50 weapons, take aim, and let fly at the competition. Each player takes turns choosing and blasting, and each decision is executed in fast-action animation and good-looking graphics.

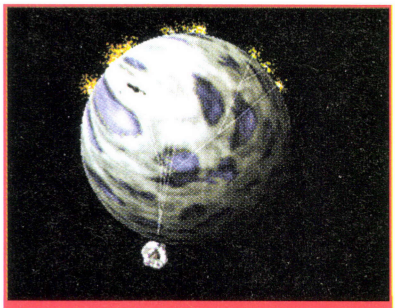
Asteroids meets Battleship

The fly in this star-crossed ointment is that each planet has mass and gravity. This puts the "head" into WarHeads. A virtuoso player can carefully calculate weapon capability and gravity to catapult a dead-shot off the atmosphere of a planet, around a corner, and into an unwitting victim. Better yet, an amateur player can try to fire weenie weapons while flying near the surface of a Jupiter-sized monolith. Surprise, Space Jerk—your weak shot is going to boomerang back in the heavy gravity and hit your own ship. For those watching, it's huge laughs at someone else's expense. Gaming has no greater reward.



Choose weapons carefully or you'll nuke yourself.

There are many other subtleties. In addition to launching weapons, players can guide their spacecraft away from their initial planetside positions to get a better shot or take a more strategic position. Like weapon launching, however, flying around in the gravity-yanking environment can put you in a highly vulnerable position if your navigational skills aren't excellent. A weapons editor allows you to customize the performance of your heat-seekers, planet-piercers, and terraformers. Tweak performance, create new combinations, conceive entirely new weapons, then share the results with your playing partners via email.



These piercing bombs can drill a planet or "burrow through an elephant."

None of this comes free, though. Each weapon acquisition and strategic positioning (selected from five defensive strategies) busts the ol' budget. Excellence is rewarded, however: You receive credits for every successful maneuver. Then there's the treasury: coins floating in space between the planets. (OK, so there's outer space phenomena Carl Sagan never knew about.) A good pilot can soar through space enhancing his bank account, as long as he doesn't expose himself to enemy gunfire.

For multiplayer online play, Ionos has thoughtfully included server software with the product. Set up one of your player's systems as the server, and you and your pals have your own online-gaming network. Heckuva deal.

A few minutes after loading this deceptively simple entertainment, you'll be shooting and flying like a pro…er, well, a pro wanna-be. A few more minutes of WarHeads, and you won't come up for atmosphere until you've mastered this great little game.



With weapon chosen, it's time to execute every gamer's favorite word: "Fire!"

WARHEADS

GAMEPLAY:	A
GETTING STARTED:	A+
GRAPHICS:	B
SOUND CHECK:	A
OVERALL	A
MULTIPLAYER:	A

Surprisingly rich space-artillery action.

DEVELOPER:	totalPlay Software
PUBLISHER:	Ionos 602-607-3785
WEB:	www.ionos.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	Pentium, 16MB RAM, SVGA, 2X CD-ROM drive, mouse
RECOMMENDED:	P90, 16MB RAM, sound card
STREET PRICE:	$30

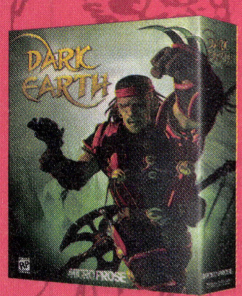
TIPS ▼ Be patient: It may take awhile, but you'll eventually master planetary gravity. ▼ On that note, don't parade your ignorance in public. Learn the moves by playing against one or two computer players before taking on a human opponent. ▼ Learn the weaponry. There's no need to spin off around the corner of your planet when a burrowing bomb will take a straight path to the enemy. ▼ Use caution when flying around in multiplayer games. You may get an easier shot, but it may also leave you vulnerable while everyone else takes their turn nailing you to a star.

PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

If you don't do SOMETHING...



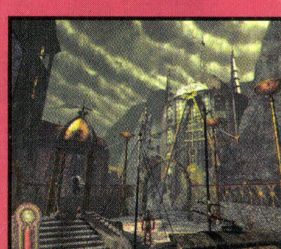
...SOMETHING will do SOMETHING to you.



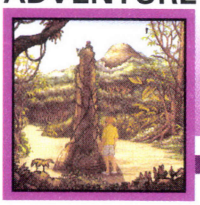
Available on Windows®95. Visit your local retailer or call 1-800-695-GAME day or night (U.S. or Canada).

MICROPROSE
www.microprose.com

You are your own worst enemy in the moody world of Dark Earth. Debris fills the air and your flesh is being attacked by a deadly virus. Poisonous clouds drift and photosynthesis has ceased. Still, it is your mission to uncover a secret history that'll help restore the one thing that can save all of humanity–light. You'll uncover dark murder plots through real-time adventure and control treacherous combat as you interact with greedy and bizarre characters. Your foes envelop the City you protect. Whether you're there or not, they continue to prey upon you as you ponder your next move. But, there is a ray of hope–you simply have to find it. **www.darkearth.com**







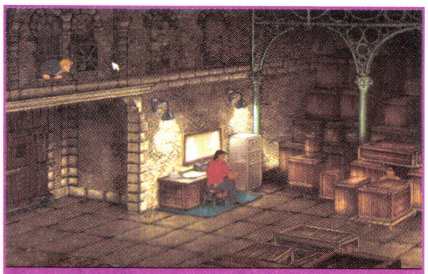
Broken Sword: The Smoking Mirror

By Peter Olafson

The artwork: lovely, soft-edged, and layered. The animation: supple and detailed. The sound: simultaneously rich and delicate. But, man, is Broken Sword: The Smoking Mirror ever *dull*.

Because while Revolution's follow-up to Circle of Blood (its name's drawn from the European version of the original game) is genuinely beautiful, it lacks a vital element—tension. Without it, the game hangs rather limply from its good looks and sonics.

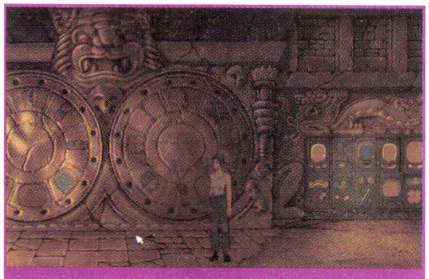
This side-view animated adventure finds you once again in control of the all-bland-American George Stobbart and French journalist Nico, as they try to thwart a plot to resurrect an especially nasty ancient god. Starting in Paris—where George gets knocked senseless and Nico's kidnapped—we follow the pair to Central America, the Caribbean, London, and a denouement deep in a Mayan pyramid.



Disable that noisy fan to distract the Indian sitting on the desk. The little fellow behind the crates? Find a way to free him. Later in the game, he'll prove invaluable.

In operation (easy) and tone (chatty), Sword is very much like Circle of Blood. That's not a complaint; it's good to be able to get right into the game, and it's fun to be able to question everyone in the Central American town of Quaramonte about everything under the sun. You even develop some old acquaintances you can return to a little later and ask about anything you might have missed.

In terms of pure graphical style, Sword has few rivals in this genre. Again and again, I found myself simply stopping to take pleasure in hand-drawn, smooth-scrolling backdrops rendered in multiple parallax layers and colors almost surreal in their richness. The southern path on Zombie Island and the jungle treehouse scene with its modeled waterwheel are especially breathtaking.



This rather out-of-character end-game puzzle is one of several stylish uses of modeling within Broken Sword.

But I also found quickly that the game doesn't have the punch of its predecessor. Why, exactly?

Don't reflect too long on this



The Central American jungle. Gorgeous, eh?

For one thing, Circle of Blood started explosively with a tangible, involving event that one couldn't help but take personally and feel driven to investigate. Broken Sword doesn't make that sort of quick, compelling connection. It's a shame the designers didn't make better use of the intro to clarify George and Nico's relationship. While George declares several times in conversation that Nico is his girlfriend, they seem more like platonic pals within the game.

For that matter, I never bought into the mankind-at-risk plot. While you can die in Broken Sword, I didn't once feel in jeopardy. When George runs into a wild boar in midgame, it's about knee-high and Disney-cute. Also, there's virtually no atmosphere. Why didn't the designers make better visual use of the impending eclipse to show passage of time and build anticipation? We never even find out enough about the principal bad guy to take him seriously—and we never actually take him on.

Even George's would-be competitors for Nico's affections aren't allowed to be normal; they're either garish or cartoony. Like Circle, Sword runs on dry English wit—try hanging around the mining company office a bit—but this time out it's less clever and more repetitious and obvious. I didn't even laugh once.

The game's dullness isn't its only problem. Sword spoils a record of generally rational puzzles with a labor-intensive puzzle-for-puzzle's-sake in the end-game, while reserving the game's key actions for the final, noninteractive animation. Excuse me? Shouldn't that be *my* job?

Looks can be deceiving—especially when you're gazing into The Smoking Mirror.

BROKEN SWORD: THE SMOKING MIRROR

GAMEPLAY:	C
GETTING STARTED:	A-
GRAPHICS:	A
SOUND CHECK:	B+
OVERALL	C+
MULTIPLAYER:	N/A

Lacks the tension and "must-see" element that made Circle of Blood so gripping.

DEVELOPER:	Revolution Software
PUBLISHER:	VIE 800-874-4607
WEB:	www.vie.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 16MB RAM, 55MB HD, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P100
STREET PRICE:	$53

TIPS

▼ On Zombie Island, get a reed from the swamp and turn it into a blowgun by inserting it into the animal lair you'll find. Fire the dart at the boar blocking your path, and grab the overhanging branch to get out of its way. The boar will clear a new path when it passes. ▼ Affix the surveyor's badge to the top of the rocky pinnacle by fastening it to the net and the vines, then casting this assemblage over the rock. ▼ Finally, use the path cleared by the boar to reach the hilltop, and here use the surveyor's tool to locate that rock pillar and the nearby treasure trove. ▼ Leave the hilltop in the direction in which you saw the treasure marker. If you stumble onto an apparent pirate attack, ya done good.



Finally, a flight sim with no limits. Flight Unlimited II from Looking Glass. The most realistic flight experience ever in a PC simulation.


Beechcraft Baron 58

Flight Unlimited II sets a whole new standard with realism, thrills and adventures you won't find in any other flight sim. Fly the speedy Piper Arrow over 11,000 square miles of breathtaking, photo-realistic Bay Area terrain. Jump in the cockpit of the notorious P-51D Mustang. Or, mix it up with over 400 different aircraft using ground, tower and approach controllers. Whether you're a rookie or an experienced pilot, take off with the most realistic flight sim ever.


DeHaviland Beaver DHC-2 Seaplane


North American P-51D Mustang

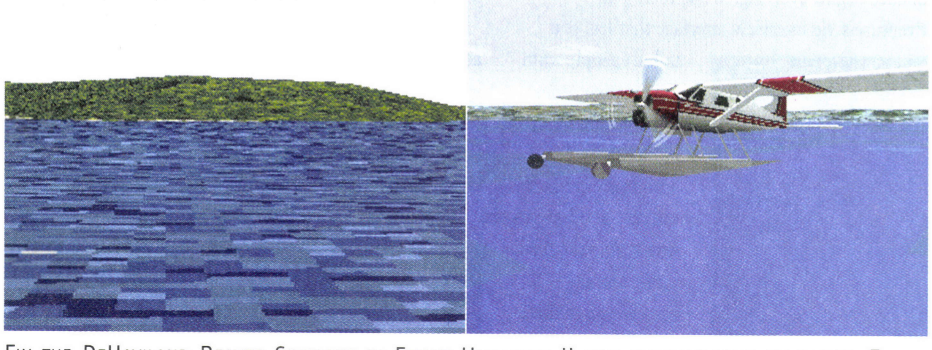

Piper Arrow 200

LOOKING GLASS TECHNOLOGIES www.lglass.com

©1997 Looking Glass Technologies, Inc., Cambridge, MA. Flight Unlimited II and Looking Glass are trademarks of Looking Glass Technologies, Inc. All rights reserved. EIDOS Interactive is a trademark of EIDOS PLC ©1997 EIDOS.

Unlimited.

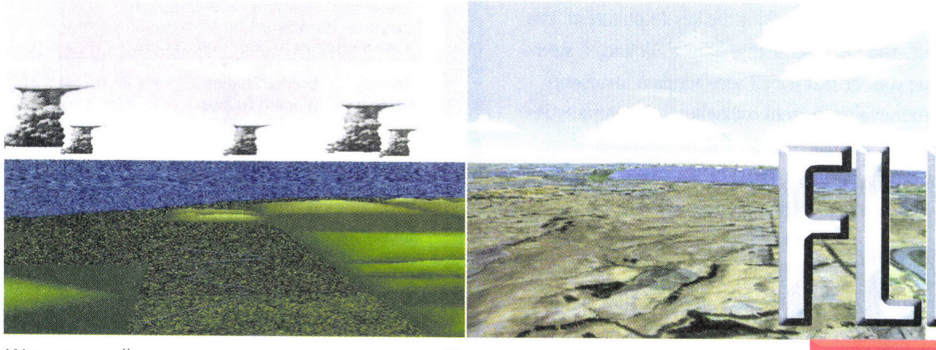
Actual screen shot from Looking Glass' Flight Unlimited II



Fly the DeHaviland Beaver Seaplane in Flight Unlimited II and actually land on water. Flight Simulator may have water, but it sure doesn't have a seaplane.

"Microsoft should have cause for concern...Flight Unlimited II's stunningly rendered world is only exceeded in excellence by its smooth interface."

"E3's Best of the Best"
Computer & Net Player



When we say "the most realistic weather conditions," we mean it. In Flight II, thunder clouds actually float across the sky as they unleash a downpour. Exactly what are those in the sky in Flight Simulator 6.0, rock formations?

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II

www.eidosinteractive.com

EIDOS INTERACTIVE



Forced Alliance

A combat game with characte

By Daniel Morris

Okay, here's a novel idea—a game where your promotions from one rank to another are actually mirrored by attendant changes in gameplay (and not just, say, the computer throwing more enemies at you). It's astonishing how many military/combat sims, whether set in real or sci-fi worlds, disregard the progression of duties, responsibilities, and changes that shift as a member of a fighting force is elevated from an entry-level rank to a position of command.

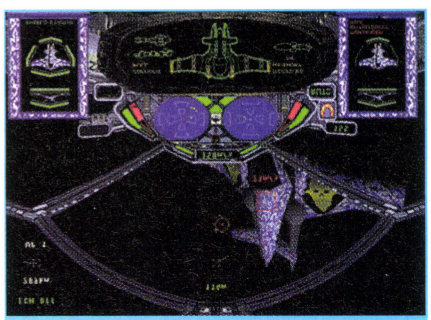
Forced Alliance, developed by Orbital Studios (you may remember the game as Alien Alliance, which was originally slated to be published by Virgin last year), is built around the promise of "consequence of rank"—much touted by the design team as the game's organizing philosophy. The idea is that gameplay changes as your character (who bears a name and call sign that you supply) advances in the military. You'll be taking orders at the start, but as you gain rank, the whole nature of gameplay shifts toward greater subtlety and responsibility.

Forced Alliance is set in a future where an ongoing war with the alien Voraptoids has left humanity's survival in doubt. As a spacefleet trainee, you're not worth much more than your weight in rivets. But you're going to change all that.

The game evolves quite nicely as you progress in the fleet. While you're a green cadet, your instructor abuses your manhood (in a style extremely reminiscent of MechWarrior 2) as you successfully complete training missions and learn to use navigation tools, radar, missiles, and the rest of the skills you'll need to survive space combat (the most valuable being instruction on preferred tactics of opposing ships).

As another alien race, the Marauders, enters the fray, new classes of starships change the balance of power in the game. Pretty soon, as you're promoted into positions of diplomatic action, you're called upon to form alliances with certain races (and gang up on others) that can get humans access to the ships they specifically need to counter the threats other races present.

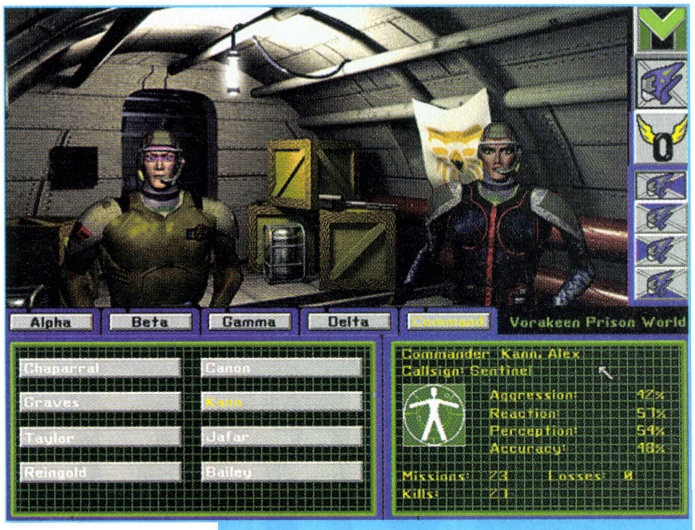
At this point, the whole structure of Forced Alliance begins evolving. While there's an adventure-style interview interface that lets you talk to people from the opening cadet missions, the onus in higher-level diplomacy is much heavier. You have to negotiate with alien races, and the choices you make regarding allies and enemies directly affect your chances of success.



The full-HUD combat view is skimpy on flight-sim material and heavy on action.

Solid computer AI is the key to pulling all this off. You never sense that Forced Alliance is steering you, or that it's all been scripted in advance. Your evolution from rookiehood to admiralty is natural and engrossing. The personalities of the aliens (particularly those of the petty Marauders, who scavenge ships and play very dirty) are fleshed out and impart a real sense of political involvement.

Where Forced Alliance lags is in its space-combat engine, which is well behind the kind of magic weaved by X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter and Wing Commander IV. While it's not boring in any way, it is comparatively flavorless and not as exciting as a good A-Wing engagement. But the combat definitely picks up once you advance in rank to the point where you start giving orders to squadrons, directing the battle as well as participating in it.



Individual pilots with specific stats and personalities require smart leadership.

Forced Alliance is an intriguing, genre-bending combat-adventure game that sets high ambitions for itself and comes through more often than it doesn't. It's definitely rough around the edges—cheesy keyboard music, some bad voice-acting. But fans of character-driven sims will find a lot to like here.

During the game, the SGI-rendered ships can be viewed from several out-of-cockpit angles.



FORCED ALLIANCE

GAMEPLAY:	B-
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS:	C
SOUND CHECK:	C+
OVERALL	B-
MULTIPLAYER:	N/A

Involving, character-driven space combat, hampered by less-than-Lucas-quality production values.

DEVELOPER:	Orbital Studios
PUBLISHER:	Ripcord Games 888-797-5867
WEB:	www.orbitalsi.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	486DX/100, 16MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P75
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS

▼ The Marauders fly scavenged Voraptoid ships and will happily swoop in close and use an electric blast to detonate opposing craft. Get proficient at killing them with long-range missiles. ▼ Another great way to deal with Voraptoid craft that prefer close combat is to lure them near and then draw them to your capital ships. ▼ Achieving radar lock on in-tight enemy ships is more or less impossible, so go to cannon whenever the bogey is close enough to see clearly.

BLOW THE OPPOSITION OUT OF THE SKY.

WE HAVE.

FLYING CORPS GOLD



3Dfx Interactive

THE BEST IN FLIGHT SIMULATION HAS JUST GOT EVEN BETTER

● FULLY FUNCTIONAL MISSION EDITOR WHICH CAN BE USED TO PRODUCE CAMPAIGNS AS WELL AS MISSIONS. ● 3D CARD SUPPORT FOR UP TO 33 FRAMES PER SECOND. ● MULTI-PLAYER SUPPORT WITH DEATH MATCH AND TEAM PLAY SUPPORTING NETWORK, MODEM AND DIRECT CONNECT. ● NEW FLYABLE AIRCRAFT INCLUDING THE CLASSIC FOKKER D-VII. ● ENHANCED VIEW SYSTEM, INCLUDING A NEW PERIPHERAL VISION MODE. ● NEW LANDSCAPE TEXTURING PROVIDING PHOTO-REALISTIC TOWNS AND VILLAGES. ● PLUS FORCE FEED STICK AND MUCH MUCH MORE.

THERE IS NO COMPETITION. BUY FLYING CORPS GOLD TODAY FOR THE ULTIMATE COMBAT FLIGHT EXPERIENCE

"FLYING CORPS IS OUTSTANDING" PC GAMER 90%
"THE DEFINITIVE WW1 FLIGHT SIM EXPERIENCE"
PC GAMES A RATING

empire INTERACTIVE

"THE NEW KING OF WW1 FLIGHT SIMS" CGW 4/5
"FLYING CORPS IS SIMPLY STUNNING"
COMPUTER GAME ENTERTAINMENT 98%

EMPIRE INTERACTIVE - CALL: 1 800 216 9706 WEBSITE: www.empire-us.com

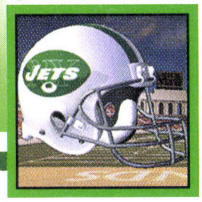
3DFX LOGO © 1996 3DFX INTERACTIVE, INC.


NDS
daytona® USA deluxe
hold xy
hold yz
hold xz
On "Gentlemen, Start Your Engines" Screen
Microsoft® Sidewinder™ Shown

As stock car racers say, "If you can't beat 'em with skill, beat 'em with a root vegetable." Welcome to the white-knuckled world of Daytona® USA Deluxe, the phenomenal 3D sequel to the hit arcade game, now on PC. 8 different stock cars. 6 heart pounding courses. An all new track. And network play means up to 7 of your buddies can eat your rubber at once. Plus with Force Feedback support, you'll feel every bumper kiss and wall bounce. Gentlemen, start your engines. If you can.


nba® action 98
tap Z
tap X
aim at hoop
tap B
Microsoft® Sidewinder™ shown.
SEGA®
hard stuff
www.sega.com

"NBA Action," the NBA, and individual NBA team identifications used on or in this product are trademarks, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property of NBA Properties, Inc. and the respective team(s) and may not be used, in whole or in part, without the prior consent of NBA Properties, Inc. ©1997 NBA Properties, Inc. "Sega" is a registered trademark in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Sega Saturn is a trademark of SEGA. All rights reserved. Windows and the Windows logo are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. ©1997 SEGA P.O. Box 8097, Redwood City, CA 94063. All rights reserved.



Legends '98

By Andrew Miller

Accolade has a reputation for producing groundbreaking sports sims. The Hardball series, Jack Nicklaus 4, and Brett Hull Hockey are just three examples of the company's generally superior sports products.

Two years ago, they developed their first football sim, Unnecessary Roughness '95, then followed it up with Unnecessary Roughness '96. I loved 'em both.

So to say that I was looking forward to Legends '98, Accolade's latest football sim, would be a vast understatement. Unfortunately for me, this game turned out to be a big disappointment. When you get right down to it, it just doesn't stack up to the competition.

First, the good stuff. The latest Legends includes all the standard equipment and features. You get all 30 NFL teams with all the current players. What's different about Legends is that the game also delivers teams and action from three eras in NFL history—1932, 1950, and 1968—for a total of 76 teams and more than 1,500 players.

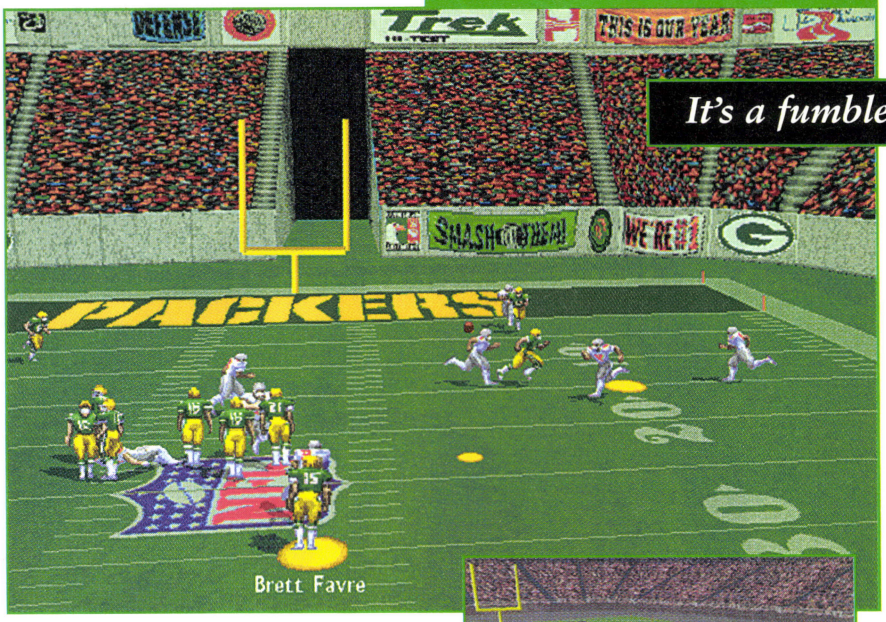
But it's not just the players and teams. Each era has its own unique rules, regulations, uniforms, stadiums, and roster sizes, making the play during each time period very realistic. This is Legends' top feature—especially its 1932 era, where players play both ways, and you can only pass the ball when the quarterback is five yards behind the line of scrimmage. (There were also no hash marks in 1932, so if you run the ball out of bounds you have to line up about 10 feet from the sideline. This makes for some very interesting play-calling.)

However, Legends suffers from a fatal flaw—the developers simply tried to cram too much into the game. As a result, they forgot about what makes a good sports sim: good graphics and smooth gameplay.

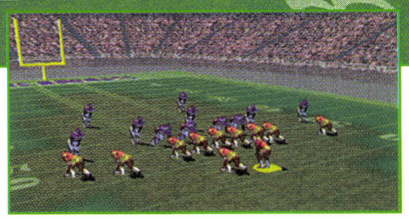
Legends '98 offers a draft mode option.



The unfrozen tundra of Lambeau field.



It's a fumble



Legends' "new and improved 3D engine" is a step backward from its Unnecessary Roughness predecessor. On a 24MB, P133 system, the players' movements were unusually fast and choppy. This was especially true during the opening kickoff, when the players moved either so fast I couldn't control them, or so slow that it seemed like the game was skipping frames of action. Thankfully, the latter problem rectified itself after the first play from scrimmage. The players still moved extremely fast, though, making it almost impossible to run between offensive linemen effectively.

Passing was also difficult. For one, there are only three eligible receivers on any given play. You can have as many as five receivers running routes, but only three of them can actually catch the ball.

Graphically, Legends '98 is very average. The players are big, but the detail is fuzzy at best—the player sprites resemble those found in 16-bit console games. (The field looks pretty good, though.)

And be prepared for the fact that Legends '98 is a real hard-drive horse. You have to have more than 360MB to load the "typical version" of the game and 180MB to load the "compact version."

There are no mouse controls in the compact version of Legends '98, which at times can become very frustrating, especially when you're dealing with so many different menus. Also, my computer crashed every time I played a game in the season mode. At first I thought it might be a problem with my machine, but I brought it over to a friend's house and had similar results. (I might add that I was also told never to return.) This is simply not acceptable from a retail product.

Unfortunately, aside from the novelty of playing in different eras, there's no reason to blow a lot of cash on Legends '98.

LEGENDS '98

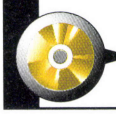
GAMEPLAY:	C-
GETTING STARTED:	C-
GRAPHICS:	C-
SOUND CHECK:	C
MULTIPLAYER:	C

C- OVERALL

Legends '98 doesn't live up to its name.

DEVELOPER:	Saffire
PUBLISHER:	Accolade 800-245-7744
WEB:	www.accolade.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	486/66, 8MB RAM, 180MB HD, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P90 or higher
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS ▼ Unlike most football sims, Legends' AI does an excellent job of recognizing and picking up blitzes. To confuse the AI pass protection, use a slightly delayed blitz from a linebacker or defensive back. ▼ Drop another player back when returning a punt. That one additional blocker can make the difference between a good return or a fair catch. ▼ If you're going to throw inside the computer's 10-yard line, use a play with crossing routes. The AI tends to play a lot of zone in the Red Zone.



PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

An offer you can't leave behind...

a free cd-rom game!

Buy Riesen® and *Front Page Sports® Baseball '98*, score *Golf®* (with *Interactive TrueSwing™*) Free!



Available at TARGET® Stores

© 1997 Sierra On-Line, Inc.

© 1997 Storck USA, L.P.


THE MACHINES FINALLY CONQUERED MANKIND.
NOT THE PHYSICAL MACHINES THEY HAD BUILT, BUT THE MACHINERY THAT RAN THEIR SOCIETIES. THE ENTITIES KNOWN AS CORPORATIONS WERE GIVEN GREATER AND GREATER POWER UNTIL THEY EVENTUALLY BECAME SELF-AWARE. SLOWLY, THE CORPORATIONS BEGAN SHAPING THE WORLD TO SUIT THEIR OWN NEEDS. WHAT WERE ONCE LARGE ORGANIZATIONS RULED BY POWERFUL PEOPLE, BECAME AS GREEDY AND COLD BLOODED AS THE HUMANS THAT HAD SPAWNED THEM. THE FEW THAT REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING WENT UNHEARD, DROWNED OUT IN THE PERPETUAL WHITE NOISE OF ADVERTISING, PROMOTIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGIES, UNTIL IT WAS FAR TOO LATE...
THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED
IT WILL BE PLAYED
SKRAP
neuronware
ENTERTAINMENT
NEURONWARE ENTERTAINMENT PROUDLY PRESENTS
A MIND BENDING 3D ACTION EXPERIENCE UNLIKE ANY OTHER COMING SOON TO A PC NEAR YOU
1 888 371 4425
www.neuronware.com



Worldwide Soccer

By Rob Smith

PC GAMES A LIST

How many soccer games can you name, aside from EA's splendid FIFA series or Microsoft's god-awful Soccer? There haven't been too many choices for the discerning soccer fan—until now.

Sega's Worldwide Soccer is the first serious competition to FIFA's virtually uncontested crown and a welcome surprise to this football fanatic—it is a Saturn port, after all.

Worldwide Soccer offers full TCP/IP Internet support as well as the required IPX and modem links for up to four players. But playing head-to-head on one computer is the way to go. As many as four players can have at it on one machine. Support for Microsoft's SideWinder gamepad is very welcome: the game makes efficient use of all the different buttons for passes, shots, and coaching options.

Forty-eight national teams have been supplied for the single-player game, with the US's Cobi Jones providing the only real-world hook amid a sea of programmer names and, seemingly, their wives', too. You can select from all the major nations to play in the standard exhibition matches; an all-encompassing Worldwide Cup; a 4- to 16-team Cup Tournament; or a 16-team, 30-game World League.

Options such as counterattack, defensive, and sweeper systems give the matches a realistic flair. Out on the pitch (aka the field, for you casual soccer fans), those tactics, player positions, and their responses (when AI-controlled) are pretty good. Of course, the occasional blooper may leave you screaming violent abuses at the hapless dope—assuming your temperament lets you get agitated at a bunch of pixels. But this really opens up the endless possibilities for different play styles that make soccer so compelling. The referee controls events, pulling out the yellow-and-red card to punish errant tackles—and in League mode, too many cards can lead to player suspension from future matches.

Superbly animated players swivel, pass, shoot, and head the ball in amazing detail. They're occasionally a little sluggish as they pull off one of the special moves, but that doesn't affect the game's flow. Four graphical-detail options are available to ensure that the system requirements stay realistic.



Fast reactions allow the strikers to pounce on loose balls in the penalty area. 1-0.



The defenders offer up a free header six yards out. World-class strikers don't miss those. He did.

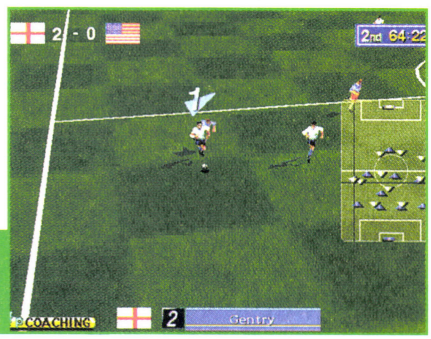
FIFA beater

You've got three fictional host stadiums; and there's the chance to play in the rain, as well as in daytime and nighttime games.

Where WWS really scores is in the playability department. Tactical decisions make a real difference on the pitch. For instance, it's a true challenge playing the quality opposition, which presses your forwards and uses the offside trap. And after a few games, intricate moves invaluable to winning—including rainbow kicks, overheads, and curling free-kicks—will have become second nature.

English commentator Gary Bloom doesn't perform with the detail level and reactionary delivery of British legend John Motson in FIFA, nor does WWS have the high polygon count. But it definitely has intelligent goalkeepers (for the most part) who command their area. The scale of players on the pitch is also far more realistic. Best of all, it has a Save Goal feature, which lets you capture those golden moments as tiny files, to be replayed to your heart's content.

The level of variation is such that you'll want to relive those moments over and over. A little work still needs to be done: The computer players sometimes twist and turn on the spot, defenders have a real weakness against attacking crosses from the wings, and attackers too often shoot straight at the keeper—even if you're directing them otherwise. Overall, however, WWS really does the job. Right now, I'd rank it up there as the best soccer game on the market.



Hit a coaching button during the game to set your defender off on an overlap, or tell the defenders to press for the offside decision.

WORLDWIDE SOCCER

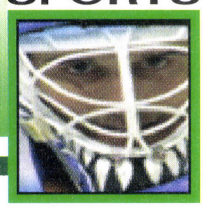
GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	B
GRAPHICS :	B+
SOUND CHECK:	B
OVERALL	A-
MULTIPLAYER:	A-

It shoots, it scores.

PUBLISHER:	Sega Entertainment 888-734-2725
WEB:	www.sega.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 15MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P166, 130MB HD, SideWinder gamepad
STREET PRICE:	$40

TIPS ▼ Get to the end line and cross to the middle, then use your forward to bury that header. ▼ If you can cope with losing part of the screen to the radar, leave it on to follow your players' movements. Try using the long-distance view in early games to get a sense of how and when they move. ▼ Only slide-tackle at desperate moments. Chances are, shoulder-barging and staying on your feet will be more successful. ▼ When it rains, make sure you hit your passes hard enough. The ball will stick in the wet grass.

PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM



NHL 98

By Daniel Morris



Who's that good-looking guy leaning in for the faceoff?

PC GAMES A LIST

NHL Hockey was the first sports game I bought for my 16-bit Sega Genesis, and from the moment it hummed onto my TV screen and I began scrolling through the teams (this was back when the New Jersey Devils still wore green pants—ah, those bygone days), I found myself hooked.

From the beginning, EA has put out the best hockey game on the market for console or PC. If I were to sit down and tabulate the total hours I've spent in front of a monitor playing each entry in the NHL series—alone, with friends, head-to-head or by modem…well, frankly, it'd be disgusting.

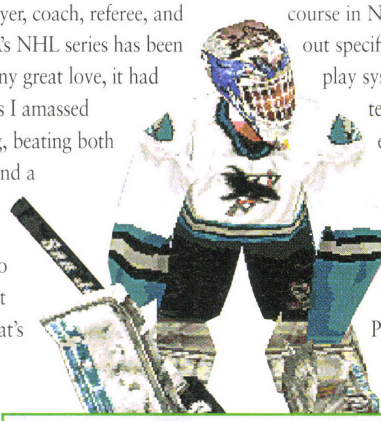
Dangerously close to perfection

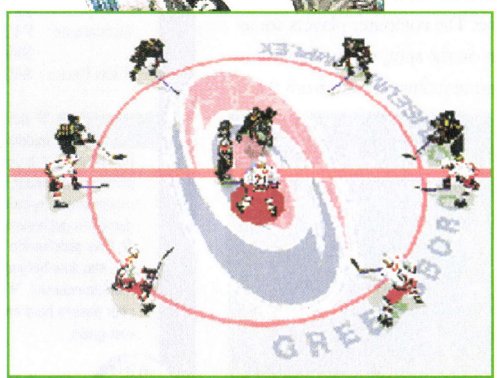
But no matter how much time I devoted to the games, no matter how much fun I had taunting buddies, no matter how many cosmetic and gameplay improvements appeared year after year, I've never been fully satisfied with the series.

As a longtime hockey player, coach, referee, and fan, my relationship with EA's NHL series has been long and tumultuous. Like any great love, it had high highs: the highlight reels I amassed while blazing down the wing, beating both defensemen and deking around a hapless goalie. What joy there was. Then, of course, there were low lows, like two seconds after I scored on that deke and said out loud, "That's the fifth time this game I've scored with that deke!"

There, in a nutshell, is the problem that I and thousands of others have always had with NHL, even if it is our favorite sports game: The artificial intelligence has never been close enough in its approximation of authentic National Hockey League action.

Then came NHL 98. And now the intelligence isn't just artificial.





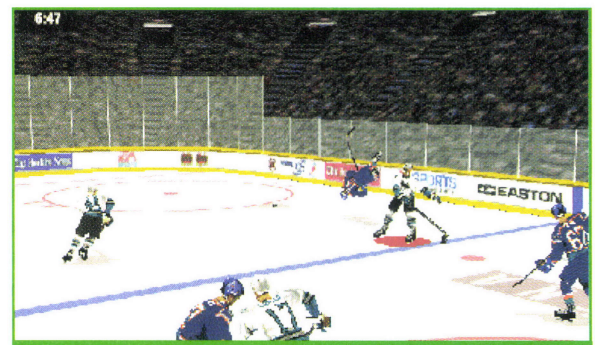
New updated teams include the Carolina Hurricanes (née Hartford Whalers).

EA decided it had heard enough grousing about unrealistic gameplay and went out and hired one of the best coaches in the business to help them solve their "head problem." Their man was Marc Crawford, Stanley Cup–winning coach of the Colorado Avalanche and soon-to-be coach of Team Canada's Winter Olympics unit in Nagano, Japan.

Crawford sat down with the EA design team and gave them a crash course in NHL coaching, laying out specific strategies and play systems that actual teams employ to ensure disciplined, fundamentally sound hockey. (See our interview with Crawford about being the intelligence behind NHL 98's AI, online at PC Games.com.)

The results of this commitment to overhauling gameplay are immediately noticeable in NHL 98. The game is a joy to play, and I say that as a hockey purist.

You can now select offensive and defensive sets from coaching menus and revel as your selections affect gameplay. Conservative? Your men will stay in position and not get caught back, at the expense of offensive production. Risk-taker? Select the funnel attack and pour all your guys at the enemy's net, defense be damned. The beauty is that the choices are yours to make (and can be changed on the fly in-game). At long last, hockey strategy has become a decisive factor in the game.



Who says the hip check is a lost art?

Nowhere is Crawford's presence more noticeable than on power plays, which are now advantages to have. Your team will set up and play a positional power play, meaning that it's now actually a detriment to your team to get a penalty. Amen.

Just a quick scan of some of my classic peeves and the solutions that have arisen: Defensemen who will abandon their check in the slot, letting a bad guy station himself unguarded in front of the crease; now they're there to rough him up. Passing lanes left completely unattended in the defensive zone; now there are sticks and skates blocking them, and occasionally a sliding d-man. No discipline in positional play; now your boys maintain the integrity of their positions and their ice-coverage zones.



What? Defensemen back in position? Hallelujah!

Visually, NHL 98 is unbelievably good, particularly with 3Dfx acceleration. The animations are astonishingly accurate and, just as importantly, are accurately placed. The signature moves of superstars are faithfully rendered, along with the innocuous after-the-whistle shuffles and sighs of the third-line mucker. John Vanbiesbrouck's captures animate a beautifully rendered goalie.

This is easily the most enjoyable multiplayer sports game I've yet played. My office mates and I went at it with four players on daisy-chained Microsoft SideWinders (definitely the pad I recommend). It was PC-sporting nirvana. Playable also via network and modem, NHL 98 is the most fun our office sporting circle has had in ages.

The NHL series is coming dangerously close to perfection, so I should probably take this opportunity to list some of the things that are standing between NHL 98 and the Holy Grail. To wit:

(1) There are still too many shots for my liking, particularly when the game is played in the full 60-minute mode. Shot totals like 69–57 are common in these contests, and that's just too many. In the next version, I'd make it tougher to get a shot on goal when it's taken under duress, on the run, or from far away. More shots should sail wide or high, or get blocked in front.



That's Lindros being helped onto the bench. Ouch.

That's the major gameplay deficiency. The following are just friendly suggestions.

(2) Add a true general-manager's package into the game. By this, I mean trading against a savvy computer AI while bartering for contract terms and dollar amounts. Draft picks, farm development... in short, multiseason play.

(3) In the coaching menus, I'd add an option to shadow an opposing team's superstar, allowing you to select a defensive whiz and lock him onto a Fedorov or a Lindros, much as real coaches do. Heck, there are guys like Mike Peca who are making a living shadowing one man around the rink all night long.

(4) Add an option to implement a Neutral Zone Trap. I don't blame EA for not including the trap in this game, because it does slow things down and make for low-scoring contests played mainly between the blue lines. But it's a key system and should be available.

Okay, that's it for my moaning. Now I'm going to pull on my referee jersey and engage some coworkers in a head-to-head NHL 98 game. If you're wise, you'll do the same. (Well, you can leave out the ref jersey.)



Backhander up under the crossbar...goal!

TIPS

Today's tips come straight from The Man himself: Marc Crawford. He's got a Stanley Cup ring. You don't.

- Line match-ups are a big deal now, so take advantage of them when you're the home team. Assemble a defensively skilled checking line and put it on the ice whenever the opponent's top line is on. That shift's job will just be to shut them down. Then try to get your top line on against the opponent's second line. The difference in skill level is generally enough to give you a crucial edge.
- Choose the "umbrella" power-play strategy if you have a defenseman with a powerful point shot. Your opponent has to respect the guy's shot and challenge him, which should open up a passing lane. If he lets you have the shot, let it rip and look for a rebound or deflection.
- Also on the subject of power plays, learn to hold the puck down low, in a corner or behind the net. Wait. Wait. This is a game of "Where's Waldo?"—somebody is open somewhere. Find him and make the pass.
- If you're trailing, consider the "funnel" strategy, which will send all of your forwards to the slot looking for junk goals. It's defensively risky but offers great return on offensive production if you've got big, tough forwards to crash the net with.



NHL 98

GAMEPLAY:	A
GETTING STARTED:	A
GRAPHICS:	A-
SOUND CHECK:	B+
MULTIPLAYER:	A

OVERALL: A

PC hockey at its best, with first-rate visuals, gameplay, and replayability.

PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts 800-245-4525
WEB:	www.ea.com/easports
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P75, 16MB RAM, 47MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P120, 3Dfx
STREET PRICE:	$50

BEAUTY VS BEAST

Modern supercars battle the power of the past!



6 Exotic Tracks San Francisco, England's Lake District, Swiss-Italian Alps, German Autobahn, Kyoto City in Japan, and Washington D.C.

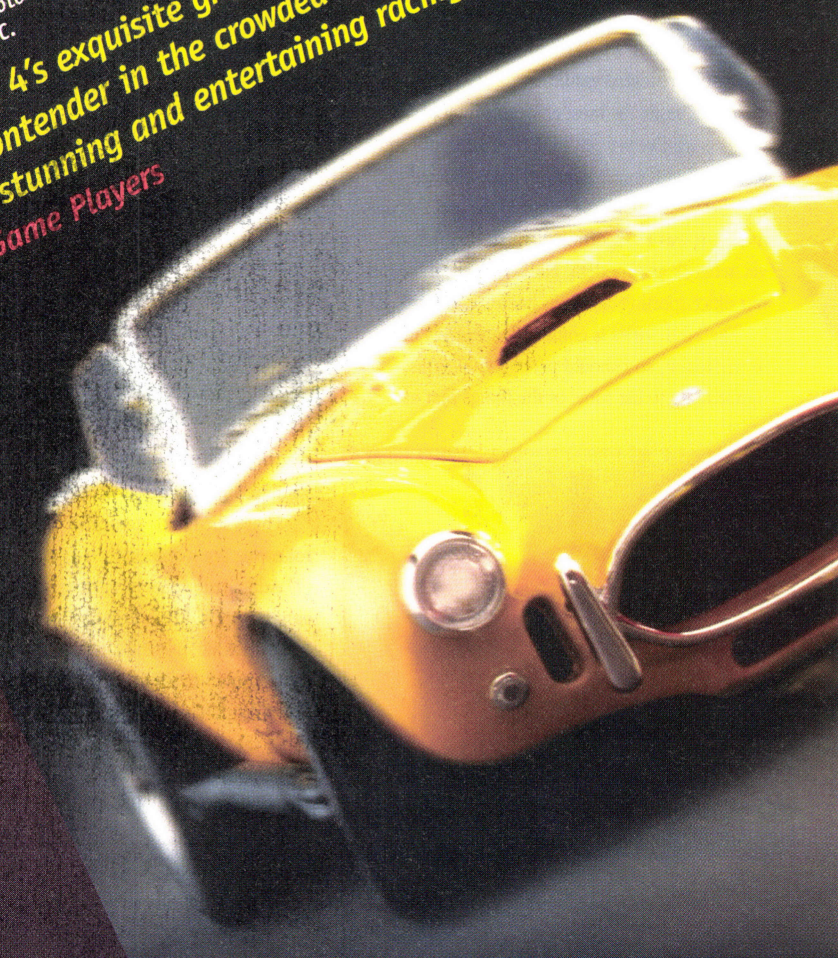
True Driving Physics let you really feel what it's like to be behind the wheel of a '70 Hemi Cuda or Jaguar XJ220!

More ways to race! Challenge the world in Single Race, Ghost Car Mode, World Circuit, Masters Cup and a variety of multi-player tournaments.

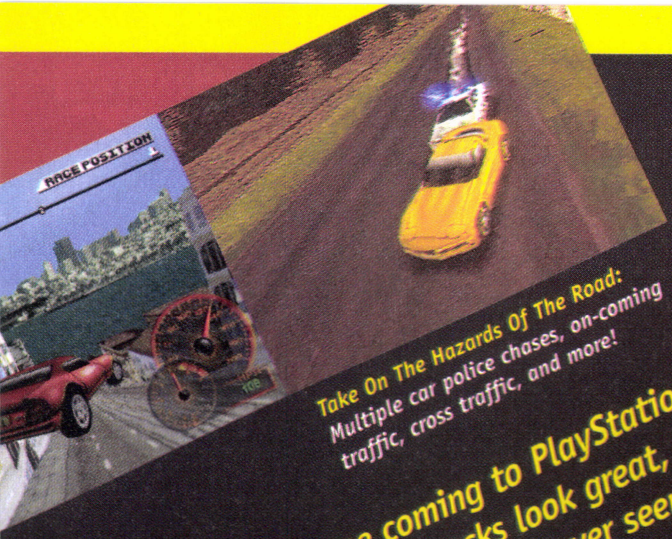
"Test Drive 4's exquisite graphics make it an instant contender in the crowded racing genre... visually stunning and entertaining racing game"
-Ultra Game Players

Modern supercars:
- Jaguar XJ 220™
- Dodge® Viper GTS
- TVR® Cerbera™
- Chevrolet® Corvette®
- Nissan 300ZX®

Power of the past:
- Shelby Cobra™ 427
- '69 Chevrolet® Corvette® 427
- '70 Chevrolet® Chevelle® SS 454
- '69 Chevrolet® Camaro® Z/28
- '70 Plymouth® Hemi Cuda



Test Drive and Test Drive 4 are registered trademarks of Accolade, Inc. ©1997 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved. Developed by Pitbull Syndicate. All other trademarks are of their respective companies. 3Dfx is a trademark of 3Dfx, Inc. Power VR is a trademark of NEC, Inc. Rendition is a trademark of Rendition, Inc. Dodge Viper, Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger, Plymouth Cuda and the Plymouth GTX are registered trademarks of Chrysler Corporation, U.S.A. and are used under license. ©Chrysler Corporation 1997. "Nissan" and the "300ZX" are registered trademarks of Nissan. Reproduced by permission. The word "Jaguar", the leaping cat device, and the characters "XJ220" are the trademarks of Jaguar Cars Ltd., England and are used under license. Chevrolet Corvette, Chevelle, Camaro and Body Designs are trademarks of Chevrolet Motor Division, General Motors Corporation, used under license to Accolade, Inc. Pontiac GTO and Body Design are a trademark of Pontiac Division, General Motors Corporation, used under license to Accolade, Inc. "Shelby Cobra" and associated logos and symbols are used under license. TVR is a trademark of TVR Engineering Limited. The TVR Cerbera and 12/8 are under license.



Take On The Hazards Of The Road:
Multiple car police chases, on-coming traffic, cross traffic, and more!

"...the best racing game coming to PlayStation this holiday season... the tracks look great, the car models are the best we've ever seen... gameplay and control are peerless"
-PSXtreme

"...one smokin' racing game"
-GamePro

"Test Drive 4 is the clear choice for BEST RACING GAME OF 1997!"
Official E3 Best Of Show Awards
-Gamepen

GAMEPEN'S BEST OF E3 AWARD

Hot Soundtrack
Featuring The Music Of
Orbital
&
The Younger, Younger 28s

TEST DRIVE® 4



Download the demo today at www.accolade.com

TO ORDER DIRECT CALL 1.800.245.7744

ACCOLADE™

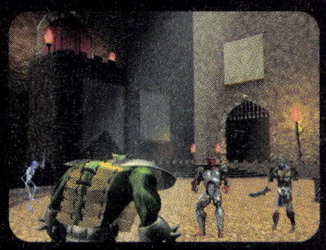
3Dfx

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Available November '97 For Sony PlayStation and PC CD-ROM!

Prepare to meet thy maker.







When you're ready for skull-crushing, hard-hitting, tournament style action ... you're ready for Drachen Zor.™ Not just another fighting game, Drachen Zor takes you on a no-holds-barred battle through the nine blood pits of Drakkor – a mystical fantasy world where 16 high-definition, fully-mobile, 3D warriors all fight to become Warlord of the Dragon Gate.

Fight one character at a time, or up to three others with its multiplayer networking mode – either way, you'll encounter combatants of all shapes and sizes attacking from all angles. And with more than 54,000 different playing combinations, you could play this game forever.

Assuming you don't meet thy maker first.

Drachen Zor

SOUTHPEAK™ INTERACTIVE

www.southpeak.com

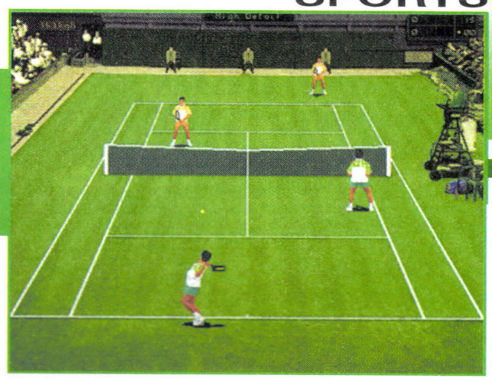
Developed by:
8th WONDER GAMES™

Windows® 95 CD-ROM

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Drachen Zor, SouthPeak and the SouthPeak logo are trademarks of SouthPeak Interactive LLC. Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating information.

Tennis Elbow



Long-suffering tennis fans finally get some service.

It's been a long time since a good tennis game appeared for the PC (I'm thinking Jimmy Connors Pro Tennis Tour 2 from Blue Byte, which I was playing six years ago). So the arrival of French developer Goto Software's Tennis Elbow (only Europeans could've come up with such a scintillating name) is both unexpected and surprisingly welcome.

Tennis Elbow is an arcade-style game that actually provides a wealth of sim-type detail to sink your sneakers into. The gameplay's instantly addictive, with player animations that create a very believable range of movement and action. You can play with keyboard, mouse, or gamepad (but not Microsoft's SideWinder, and configuration of various devices is a little flaky), selecting shots from normal, fighting, and defensive strikes, along with the complete range of slices, lobs, drop shots, volleys, and smashes. You can vary your service with weak, regular, and strong pace, and apply spin to keep your opponent guessing. It all fits together nicely into an endlessly playable package.

Love at first sight

The sim experience is less compelling, but it's there. You can save a character's progress, choosing physical features, handedness, nationality, and so on as you play the World Tour—earning points toward your global ranking and shares of a tournament's prize money. Opponents vary in skill and style, from defensive-minded baseliners to purely aggressive serve-and-volley men. (Oh, yeah: They're all men. No women to be found here.)

More options increase the value. Play on any type of surface—indoor, outdoor, clay, grass, or cement—and play networked, via null modem, or head-to-head at one machine. The head-to-head experience is highly recommended, although the game's less-than-seamless setup/configuration scheme makes preparation a headache. The whole setup interface is typical of DOS-based games; it lacks the polish and ease of use that comes standard with most big productions.

Nonetheless, tennis fans should pick this one up. For simple fun and enthralling gameplay, Tennis Elbow is a clean winner. *—Daniel Morris*

TENNIS ELBOW

GAMEPLAY:	B+
GETTING STARTED:	C+
GRAPHICS:	B
SOUND CHECK:	B
MULTIPLAYER:	A-
OVERALL	B+

Arcade-flavored tennis serving up endless replayability.

PUBLISHER:	Goto Software (33) 03 20 66 55 00
WEB:	www.tenniselbow.com
PLATFORM:	DOS CD
REQUIRES:	486DX2, 8MB RAM, SVGA
RECOMMENDED:	P60, 16MB RAM
STREET PRICE:	$30

PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

KickOff 97

Decent commentary is undermined by careless claims of goals and misses—when the opposite has just happened.



Since the heyday of the Amiga, the KickOff franchise has been one of the most enjoyable soccer sims around. Sadly, someone at Anco decided it needed to be brought into the modern era of the PC and 3D. Hence this incarnation, which, despite its wealth of customizable options and virtually limitless combinations of teams and tactics, fails in the most important area: fun.

Navigating through those options, which present over 300 club and national teams using real player names, is relatively painless. Five different play types—from the usual "friendly" games to tournaments (where you play against 30 teams, the computer tracking the number of games it takes you to beat them), as well as league and cup competitions—provide the competitive edge.

Control options are simple, involving just the use of the direction controls and a pass-and-shoot option (combinations of these, depending on the height of the ball, allow you to pull off overhead kicks, volleys, and headers). Four viewing variations highlight the textures on the field; all of these are adjustable to suit the requirements of most PCs. Individual ratings for each of the 5000+ players add some detail, but all this effort seems to fall apart when the players finally get onto the pitch and down to the action.

When the whistle blows for kick-off, the game runs a delicate edge between fast-flowing, free-moving high-class soccer, and careless, dumb, uneducated kickaround. Sadly, the latter too often comes to the fore. At times, the player AI is so bad, it's laughable. Only rarely is it right on the ball.

Serious effort has been put into creating incredibly detailed animations for each action. They work well on the whole, but it's no good when gameplay is somewhat lacking. Be it in arcade or sim mode, playing any of the varied teams, against a friend in multiplayer, in one of your own edited dream-teams, or even replaying some of the finer moments—there's too much aggravation and not enough fun. And it doesn't even have its own uninstaller. *—Rob Smith*

Not a fan pleaser

KICKOFF 97

GAMEPLAY:	D
GETTING STARTED:	C+
GRAPHICS :	B
SOUND CHECK:	B-
MULTIPLAYER:	C-
OVERALL	D+

I'm a big soccer fan. This isn't a fun soccer game.

DEVELOPER:	Anco
PUBLISHER:	Maxis 800-336-2947
WEB:	www.maxis.com
PLATFORM:	DOS 5.0/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	486DX/66 (DOS), 8MB RAM, 50MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P166 (Win 95), 16MB RAM, 60MB HD, patience
STREET PRICE:	$40

F/A-18

KOREA

The latest in hardcore realism from the engineers of the the award-winning *F/A-18 Hornet 3.0*, **F/A-18: KOREA**, finally brings the realism and quality of genuine military simulators to your Windows '95/NT4 PC or PowerMac.

H I G H - R E A L I S M S T R I K E F I G H T E R S I M U L A T I O N





3Dfx Screen shot

F/A-18: KOREA is the culmination of over 5 years development by a small, dedicated team of engineers and artists who have always known what it takes to please the discriminating "simmer". Arcade game players need not apply! F/A-18: KOREA features the most accurate avionics and flight dynamics of any simulation ever produced, without compromising game play.

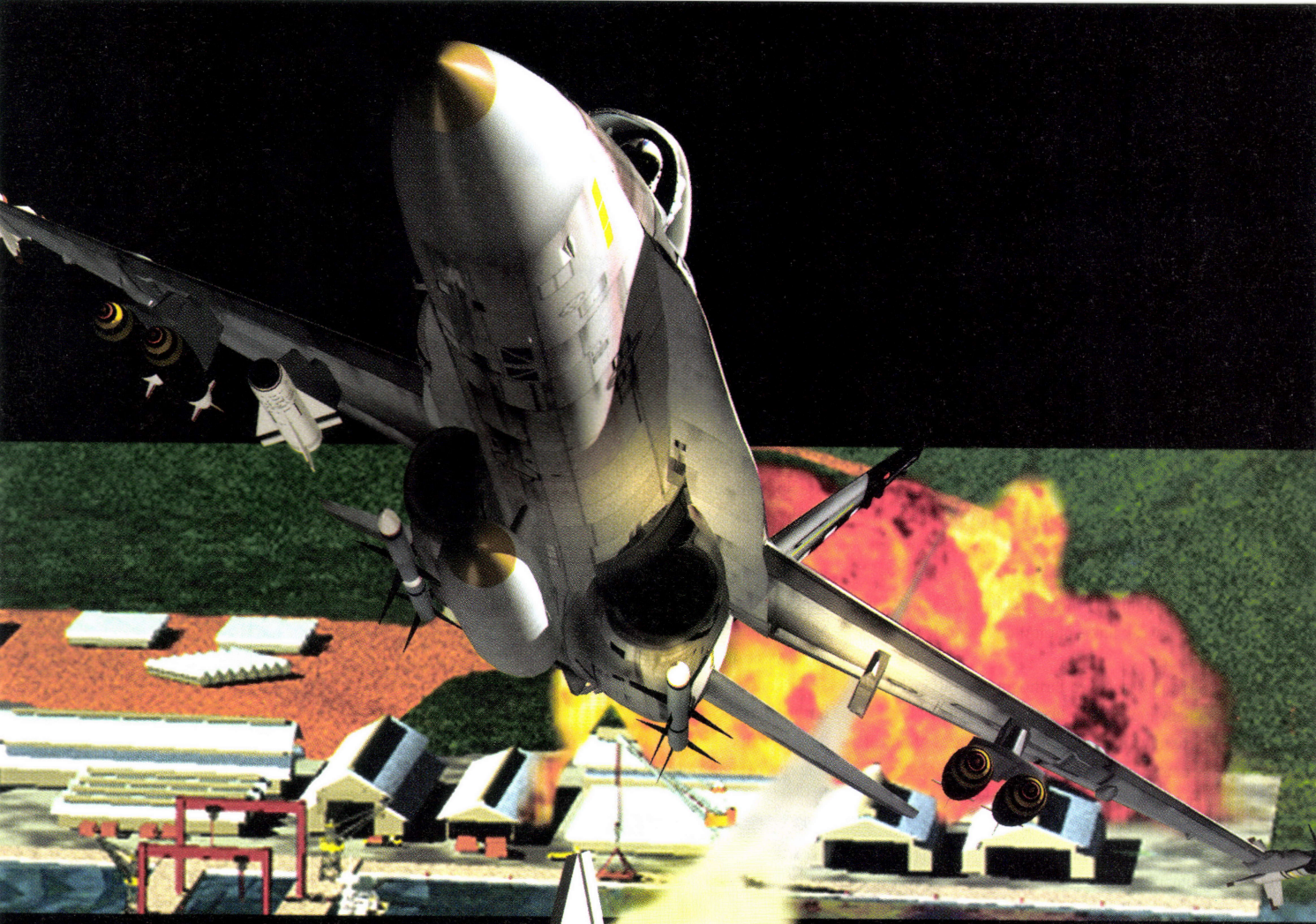
Utilizing the latest 3D technology, F/A-18: KOREA is able to provide the industry's highest resolutions and frame rates. F/A-18: KOREA offers texture mapped 3Dfx Voodoo and Voodoo Rush graphics, as well as our own proprietary flat shaded differential scan conversion graphics for exceptionally fast and crisp visuals.

F/A-18: KOREA provides over 90 minutes of multimedia training, with diagrams, movies and voice dialog, as well as extensive printed documentation written by a former Marine "Strike-U" instructor and F/A-18 Hornet pilot.

F/A18: KOREA's mission creator/editor allows you to design highly intelligent missions with detailed instructions for each computer controlled player. Dictate the behavior and assignments of friendly and enemy airplanes, SAM sites and ground vehicles.

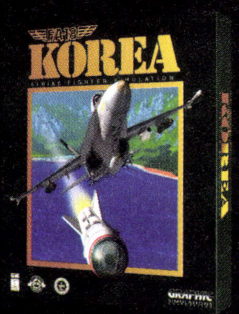
COMBAT PILOT TESTED

For product information and availability, check out our web page at: **www.graphsim.com**



Proprietary ultra high-speed differential scan
onversion graphics.
Native 3Dfx® texture mapping and effects
Powerful mission creator/editor
Highly realistic carrier operations
Detailed printed and online
locumentation
Extensive theater of ops
vith beautiful rolling terrain
Authentic avionics and
ight modeling
Network play over LAN or
nternet
Huge arsenal, including B-
7 tactical nuke!
Virtual cockpit with multiple
adlocking options
Multiple wingman commands

Vindows '95/NT 4.0 & PowerMac
Dfx® graphics require 3Dfx-based graphics accelerator.



GRAPHIC
SIMULATIONS
CORPORATION



Birthright

Follow your destiny

By Peter Olafson

It doesn't come as much of a surprise that Synergistic Software is the power behind the hybrid of strategy and adventure that is Birthright: The Gorgon's Alliance. After all, a decade ago, that developer (then independent, working principally for Virgin) was one of the first to pair wargame and adventure in its germinal War in Middle Earth and later, more successfully, in its two Excalibur games.

In a sense, Birthright (based on TSR's tabletop game) is the logical successor to those early efforts at genre-busting—and one of the better ones I've seen. Birthright isn't the perfect hybrid—it has a distinctly weak link—but it does find its level and stick to it.

Sierra has classified Birthright as an RPG, but it essentially looks to me like an ambitious turn-based wargame. Your task, as regent of one of 18 realms, is to defeat the forces of the monstrous Gorgon as they advance inexorably south across the land of Anuire.

You'll spend much of your time lingering over the zoomable map, parceling out Regency points (which reflect the extent of your domain) and gold to improve your chances of success with the 18 "domain actions," or commands. These might include building roads and trade routes, creating and expanding four types of "holdings" (law, guilds, temples, and "Sources," which represent magical power), enlisting henchmen, or agitating to improve a province's loyalty. Eventually, you'll go to war.

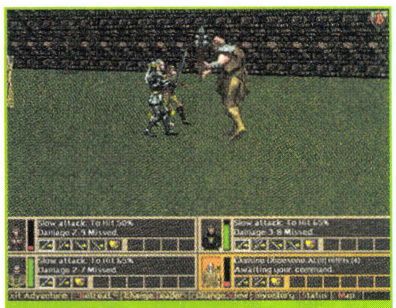
War is fun. Indeed, inter-army combat's the most accessible of the game's three distinct styles—a delicious-looking, more structured take on Mindscape's Warhammer. Click on your units in reserve, drop 'em on a grid, give 'em a destination (and place to aim, in the case of bowmen), and watch 'em mete out punishment in a splendidly stormy full-field view. That's not to say "tactics begone," but rather that the tactics came naturally.

By contrast, this Birthright novice found the core game plenty complicated. While the basic concepts of statecraft in Birthright have a lot in common with other conquer-the-world strategy games, I frequently found myself feeling kinda thick-witted. What should I be doing? And what after that? There's a lot to learn, and that curve is steeper because the offline manual covers only the basics and leaves many of the details to the online help. The designers have included three in-game tutorials that give you a little push into the game. But your four advisors are passive, and I would've appreciated the pressure of a helpful hand on my shoulder when I needed it.

Initially, these quests (26 of them) are rather enjoyable. It's a relative novelty to control a quartet in a first-person action game, the graphics are fairly sharp and realistic, and many of the quests are of good size. But the adventure module needs work: they're ultimately too similar in objective, too monotonous in content, and too ridden with perspective issues to be really persuasive. And in late summer of '97, I'd use something a little more advanced than a Doom-style engine to power them.



Dhoesone collects its wits after knocking off a nasty little kingdom to the south.



In adventure mode, the party beats the stuffing out of an ogre who happened to wander across its path.

We're winning (for a change!). Dwarven bowmen at the rear are about to wreak havoc on the enemy center.



Birthright does support network, modem, and Internet play (via Sierra's gaming server, SIGS) for up to eight players. It's easy to find a game here...and easy to walk away with a bloody nose.

It's not that I'm unhappy with Birthright. I'm just feeling a little dumb. It'll pass, and I'll be back—older and wiser—when the expansion set ships this fall.

BIRTHRIGHT

GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	C-
GRAPHICS:	C-
SOUND CHECK:	B+
OVERALL	**B**
MULTIPLAYER:	**B**

Pleasant, if somewhat tired and undercoached.

DEVELOPER:	Synergistic Software
PUBLISHER:	Sierra On-Line 800-757-7707
WEB:	www.sierra.com
PLATFORM:	DOS/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P75, 8MB RAM, 30MB HD, 1MB SVGA, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P90, 16MB RAM, 6x CD-ROM drive
STREET PRICE:	$30

TIPS ▼ The territories farthest from the Gorgon are not necessarily the best starting points. You've got to think about your neighbors as well. (Diemed, for instance, has a serious army on its borders.) ▼ You'll receive lots of offers from potential allies, but don't try to be everyone's friend. (The game's complicated enough.) Strike a pact when it's useful—when an ally can be of immediate aid to you. ▼ Shepherd your archers carefully across the battlefield. In hand-to-hand, you might as well just hang them on meat hooks, but their ranged attacks, especially when massed, can turn the tide.

1994 The Elder Scrolls® ARENA Role-Playing Game of the Year*

1996 The Elder Scrolls® DAGGERFALL Role-Playing Game of the Year**

1997 The Elder Scrolls® Legend Series begins...



From the epic role-playing world of Daggerfall & Arena, springs forth a sinister tale of mortal conflict & triumph. The celestial citadel known as Battlespire has been ravaged by a black-hearted Daedra Lord. If this dark Lord & his minions can brush aside an entire defending garrison of the Empire's Battlemages, can you, a solitary hero, stand against them?

- Create your character with the proven character design system based on the Daggerfall game system. It gives you unrivaled power to custom-build the exact type of hero you want.



- Chat with, conspire & then betray your enemies. Mete out justice with sword & fyre. Battle fiends so cunning they smell your blood, hear your footsteps, & track you like prey.
- Explore exquisitely detailed 3D interiors & exteriors. From ominous dungeons to towering castles, all rendered in splendid hi-res & hi-color.
- Wage war in multi-player mode! Team vs. computer, team vs. team or the ultimate Deathmatch via IPX or Internet.



An Elder Scrolls® Legend

BATTLESPIRE™

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS™

WWW.BETHSOFT.COM

powered by XnGine

FREE INTERNET GAME PLAY www.mplayer.com M PLAYER

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

1370 Piccard Drive • Rockville, MD 20850 • BBS 301.990.7552 • Fax 301.926.8010

Arena—Role Playing Game of the Year: Computer Gaming World, Computer Player, Game Machine, Games Magazine.
Daggerfall—Role Playing Game of the Year: Computer Gaming World, PC Gamer, PC Games, PC Today, CGDC Spotlight Award

Bethesda Softworks™, Daggerfall®, Arena®, Battlespire™ & The Elder Scrolls® are trademarks of Media Technology Limited. Copyright© 1994-1997 Media Technology Limited. All rights reserved.

AFRAID OF THE DARK?

YOU WILL BE!



Lead a squad of up to 10 Space Marines in over 30 terrifying turn-based missions!



Slaughter the bloodthirsty Scay'Ger with just a point and click using the intuitive interface!



View the tense action from almost any angle with a free-floating mouse-controlled camera!



"Think *X-Com* meets *Quake* and you might see the picture, and subsequently start salivating."
GamePen

"*Incubation* looks to be one of the best tactical combat games of the year."
PC Games

"Every single weapon has some kind of demented effect, all of which are wonderfully gross and twisted."
online gaming review

"...Blue Byte has created what has to be one of the best looking strategy games ever."
Computer Games Strategy Plus

Featuring the Revolutionary Extreme Assault graphics engine!

INCUBATION

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

1 TO 4 PLAYERS
LAN • Internet
Modem
Play-by-Mail

Available 4th Quarter 1997.
Call (800) 933-2983 for a FREE demo or download it from www.bluebyte.com.
Mention source code # INCPCGS1197

RATING PENDING RP ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

Blue Byte

Blue Byte Software, Inc. • 870 E. Higgins Road, Suite 143 • Schaumburg, IL 60173 © 1997 Blue Byte Software, Inc. All rights reserved.

Red Alert: The Aftermath



Multiple nuclear explosions are a reality in Aftermath.

Aftermath, Westwood's second official Red Alert add-on (the first was Counterstrike), features 18 new missions, 18 new animated cut-scenes, 100 new maps, and a few variations on existing military units.

Despite the very real need for fresh multiplayer maps for Red Alert–online demons, Aftermath, like Counterstrike, is a bit of a yawn. If Westwood had released a simple yet sizable set of new maps for $10 to $15, then these packages would be on safer

Old soldiers never die

ground. But hyping the new missions as an extension of the original Red Alert experience is a bit misleading. One of the big draws to Red Alert is its continuing story—an entertaining plus that put the missions into a more enjoyable context. The new missions in Aftermath come off as singular and disjointed affairs that never truly draw players into the experience.

But Westwood can be commended for doing a better job in Aftermath with new extra-large multiplayer maps and the new military units. The best of the latter are Soviet missile-subs and Allied demolition trucks. The missile-subs pack a wallop, and finally equalize Soviet naval potential against Allied naval units and ground installations. The demolition trucks are nothing more than a nuke on wheels. And you can use more than one at a time! Three of these babies targeted at strategically placed enemy installations can take out an entire base.

Other new weapons classes include an Allied Chronosphere tank, improved Soviet Tesla tanks and shock troops, and mechanics. The Chrono tank can teleport itself anywhere on a revealed map, but it can take little damage and only shoots medium-impact missiles. The new Teslas look a lot better than in Counterstrike, but they're otherwise effectively unchanged. The shock troops are basically little Tesla dudes—good for in-camp defense, but very expensive. The mechanics are Allied troops that can repair units in the field—they die quickly.

Aftermath will no doubt find a home with many Red Alert owners, but this is a maintenance update: Don't expect major excitement.

—George T. Chronis

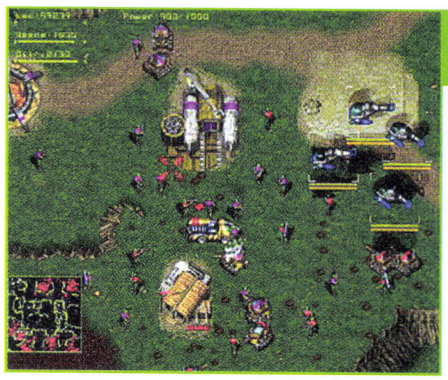
THE AFTERMATH

GAMEPLAY:	C
GETTING STARTED:	B
GRAPHICS:	C+
SOUND CHECK:	B
OVERALL	C+
MULTIPLAYER:	B

Solid enough, but not highly entertaining.

PUBLISHER:	Westwood Studios 800-874-4607
WEB:	www.westwood.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 16MB RAM, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P90
STREET PRICE:	$22

L.E.D. Wars



Uncontrolled mayhem breaking out on 21st-century Earth.

Okay, what's the count at now? I've personally lost track, but the real-time strategy games are piling up in our offices like empty coffee cups.

Most of them look a lot like L.E.D. Wars, one of fledgling publisher Ionos' first releases. Set in the 21st century, L.E.D. Wars offers a generically futuristic excuse for global corporate combat. In this case, a genetics experiment has gone awry, and now all of humanity has been genetically altered and is dependent on a drug called L.E.D. (Life Evolution Drug—don't ask) to survive. The drug is processed from a very rare plant (led), and as international corporations rush to gain a monopoly on the plant's seeding, harvesting, and distribution, private armies are sent into combat against a bit of hostile competition.

Same old strategy

L.E.D. Wars definitely picks a target audience and sticks with it—this is a game for hardcore real-time strategy people. Its learning curve is very steep.

Resource management alone takes an hour to get familiar with, even with AI handling most of the chores. You have to keep tabs on seed, led, oil, and power supplies, overseeing your seeders and harvesters as you produce the L.E.D. that fuels your armies (and fills your coffers, thanks to the global market).

Combat is hectic. War is fought on land, sea, and air, with a few interesting tactical considerations among the units. Key bridges can be demolished with saboteur units, or repaired by constructors. Recon vehicles can probe the flanks of the enemy's line. And you'll need to stay on high alert to defend your harvester sites, or risk surrendering an L.E.D. field to an opponent.

L.E.D. Wars is tooled for the multiplayer experience, with eight-way play available head-to-head or via a network, modem, or the Internet. There are 20 multiplayer-only maps as well as the 16 single-player missions, plus a map editor for designing new scenarios.

There's a lot here to play around with, but ultimately L.E.D. Wars is hard to distinguish from the many C&C clones in recent months.

—Daniel Morris

L.E.D. WARS

GAMEPLAY:	C+
GETTING STARTED:	C-
GRAPHICS :	B-
SOUND CHECK:	C
OVERALL	C
MULTIPLAYER:	C+

The latest C&C clone rolls in the door.

DEVELOPER:	Larian Studios
PUBLISHER:	Ionos 602-607-3785
WEB:	www.ionos.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 16MB RAM, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P90
STREET PRICE:	$40



PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

The New

PANZER GENERAL® II. More than a sequel. An entire generation beyond anything yet seen in strategy games. And seeing *is* believing. Witness the LIVING BATTLEFIELD™ a new standard for strategy game artwork. Featuring the heightened realism of hand-rendered maps — thirty painstakingly crafted battlefields that are faithful to the real ones of WWII — the LIVING BATTLEFIELD also showcases detailed 3D-rendered combat units with six facings.

Of course, this beauty is beyond skin deep. The phenomenal game play of the second generation PANZER GENERAL game engine is truly



THE LIVING BATTLEFIELD SERIES features the enhanced realism of hand-crafted maps and photo-realistic 3D-rendered combat units.

CLUB SSI

Play Panzer General II online at www.clubssi.com

www.panzergeneral.com

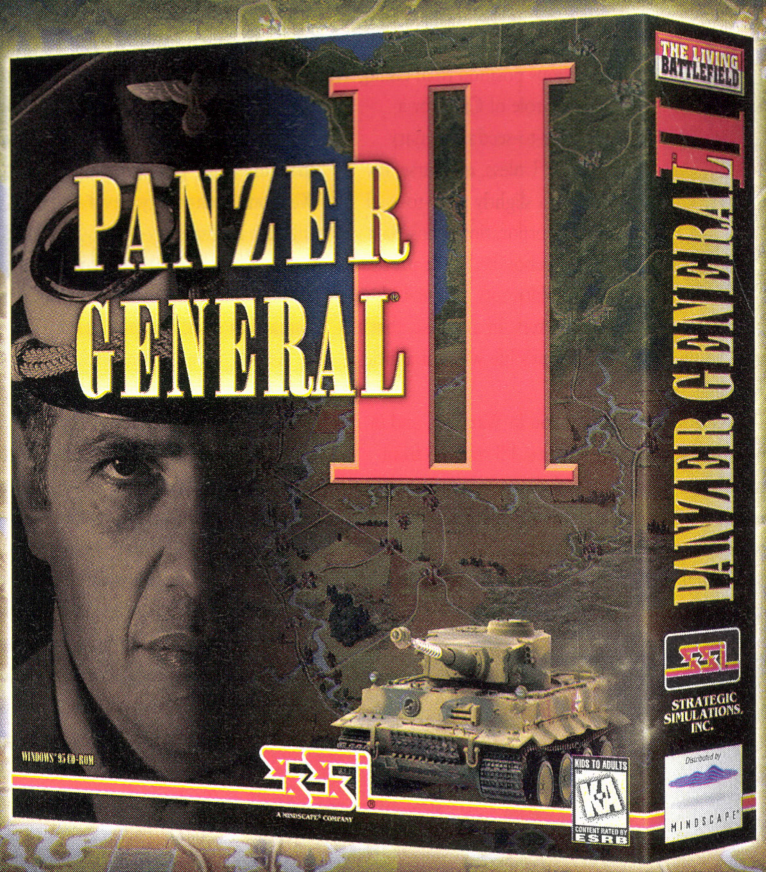
Face of Strategy Gaming.

awesome. Battles rage through WWII's Eastern and Western Fronts, North Africa, even the continental USA. Play one large campaign and three mini-campaigns — some of which are playable as either Axis *or* Allied forces. Edit scenario and unit data with the powerful Battle Editor for enhanced gameplay and extended replay. And with full multiplayer support, battles can include up to four players.

PANZER GENERAL II.

The New Face of Strategy Gaming.

To Order: Visit your retailer or call 1-800-234-3088 (USA & Canada) with VISA or MasterCard.







WINDOWS® 95 CD-ROM

Developed by the SSI Special Projects Group.

KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

SSI®

A MINDSCAPE® COMPANY

PANZER GENERAL is a registered trademark of Strategic Simulations, Inc. LIVING BATTLEFIELD is a trademark of Strategic Simulations, Inc. ©1997 Strategic Simulations, Inc., a Mindscape Company. All rights reserved.
All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective holders.



War, Inc.

Real-time strategy that's all business

By Barry Brenesal

PC GAMES A LIST

There's probably no more precarious position than taking over the role of CEO for a slightly gone-to-seed mercenary corporation. Unless, of course, it's taking over a slightly gone-to-seed mercenary corporation whose last CEO was firebombed to death by unknown infiltrators on the 40th floor of corporate headquarters. In any case, that's what you've done. Hey, what's life without a little challenge, right?

Challenges galore face you in War, Inc., and in many highly imaginative ways. I'll state up front that it's one of the best real-time strategy games I've seen in a long time. It combines features of both traditional merc releases and C&C-style products, with results that are occasionally surprising, always attractive, and thoroughly convincing.



Order your drop squads to the mission objectives, put on your helmet, and dig in for a fight.

You essentially play Granite Corporation's CEO within three modules: investment, research, and combat. Let's consider them in that order.

War, Inc.'s trend-based stock-market module simulation consists of 66 stocks in 12 basic categories. Don't look for in-depth analysis tools, but you can check out the price-to-earnings ratio, daily close and change on any offering. Later in the game, you'll have opportunities to acquire controlling interests in some of these corporations. Each company type brings with it some bonus: a 51 percent controlling share in a utilities firm, for instance, lowers the cost of power consumption.

Unlike other real-time, strategic combat games, you develop nearly all military units yourself via the research module. Your scientists can research simultaneously in up to six fields: weapons, power, armor, computers, shields, and "special" (other performance enhancements). Some researches produce new structures (like gun turrets, when you hit Weapons Technology Level 4), while others enhance the military-design templates you create. There are 20 different military unit types that can be researched and then customized in nearly infinite variety.

As you advance the clock in your office by days or weeks, monitoring your scientists' progress and the market's fluctuations, work offers will arrive from every part of the globe—60 missions in all. Feel free to examine whatever turns up, and turn down whatever you feel incapable of handling at the moment.

After accepting a mission and deploying your strike force, it's time to consider the immediate requirements: ammo depots, repair units, training facilities, and a MASH tent. For power, you'll want to construct a solar-power plant; for ore, you'll need a mining facility. Invitro Tanks will clone your infantry, while Nanite Factories construct your mechanized units.

Bear in mind that you may need few or many of these items for any given mission. Your situational analysis must determine how much muscle is enough, because muscle is expensive, and all the victories in the world won't matter if you spend more than you make.

In the past, I've occasionally taken I-Magic to task for unimaginative graphics. That doesn't apply here. Whether it's studying a revolving holographic image of a military unit or watching the photographic image of a mission site form as a spy satellite zooms in on its coordinates, War, Inc. goes beyond the simple graphical requirements of the genre, setting the mood with style.

Are you up to the challenge of this mission?



Use Invitro Tanks to clone your troops.



As a network game (null modem or IPX connection), War, Inc. can be played by up to six participants. Of course, this lacks the standalone campaign missions and financial module.

Although War, Inc. is appearing in the midst of a C&C-clone army, it proves itself as an immersive world whose atmospheric graphics conceal shrewd challenges of balance and management on many more levels than the average real-time strategy game.

WAR, INC.

GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	B+
GRAPHICS:	A-
SOUND CHECK:	B
OVERALL	A-
MULTIPLAYER:	B-

Exciting, original real-time strategy.

PUBLISHER:	Interactive Magic 800-789-1534
WEB:	www.imagicgames.com
PLATFORM:	DOS 5.0/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 110MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P133
STREET PRICE:	$60

TIPS

▼ Remember, you can win missions and still lose the game if you overspend. Try not to go on a building rampage as soon as you arrive at a mission site. Check the mission background information (after you've accepted a job) for hints as to how much support is needed. ▼ Protect your military structures during battle. Not only are they important to that mission, but they can also be sold afterward for partial cost-recovery. ▼ Play the market: it's nearly impossible to win without doing so. Play at first to make money: buy low, sell high. Only later in the game should you consider corporate takeovers and the benefits they bring. ▼ Research, research, research. What you spend in scientists' salaries you'll ultimately save by building far fewer and more powerful units.



Imperialism

By Barry Brenesal

How to go without sleep in one easy lesson

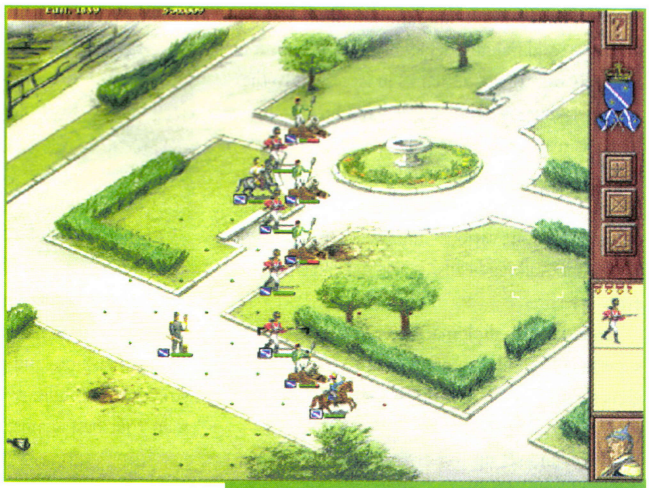
PC GAMES A LIST

Excuse me if I yawn and slowly smooth out my pillow right now. It isn't that I'm bored. Far from it. I've been playing some marathon sessions of Imperialism and I think that, as a result, my eyeballs are growing fur.

You might guess from this that I really like Imperialism. You'd guess correctly. The game is flawed in some respects, but it does other things extremely well. And it scores highest on the qualities I put foremost in turn-based strategy games. In short, it's a winner.

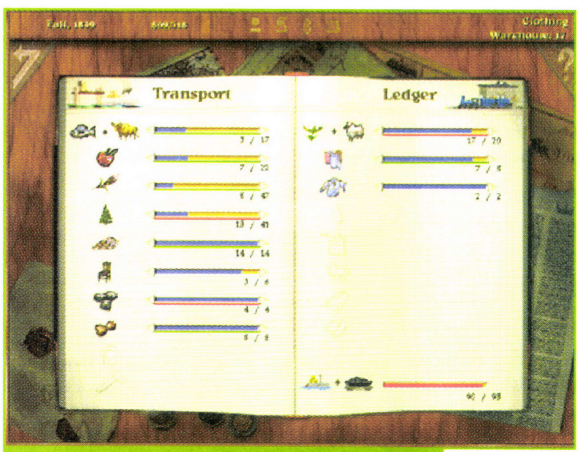
Imperialism's setting is a randomly generated world similar to Europe during the early Industrial Age. You play one of seven Great Powers in a world of 23 nations, each divided into many provinces. Your immediate goals are to develop a powerful industrial infrastructure, train an effective labor force, and establish trade and diplomatic policies that will get you the raw resources needed to manufacture and sell expensive, finished goods. Ultimately, you want to conquer or peacefully absorb as many Minor Nations as possible, so that the next Council of Governors will elect you winner when it meets after its decade-long recess. If the council doesn't arrive at a decision, well...that's another 10 years you've got to build, scheme, wheedle, and invade—unless one of your competitors beats you to the Council's nod for top dog.

Economics form the silently looming gray machine driving this game. Whether you're improving wool yield, creating a Ship-of-the-Line, or offering a nonaggression pact to a Minor Nation, turning a profit is paramount. Imperialism's economic model is a streamlined but relatively sophisticated one that adjusts global commodity prices according to supply and demand. Low availability drives a product's price up on the world stage; meeting that need in quantity drives it down. Areas of fluctuation are governed by some general guidelines, so item values never vary beyond a certain range.



The faded 2D battle scenes look like cardboard cutouts.

The interrelationships of Imperialism's marketplace are ingenious, and like any resource-juggling game, you have many important things you want to accomplish and the means to achieve only a few at any given time. Consider trees: You can turn them into lumber for ship manufacture or factory improvements. Or you can turn them into paper, which lets you send workers to the University or improve the efficiency of the workforce. Or you can two-step trees into lumber and then furniture. Furniture can be sold for an excellent profit, or used (along with canned goods and clothing) to hire new workers for your labor pool.



The Transport Ledger will help you relieve that logjam in the flow of your goods.

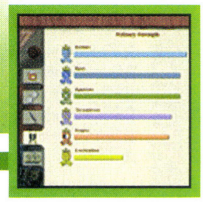
This sounds complex, but Imperialism's overall structure is both logical and transparent, providing a sense of forward momentum that carries you through complex turns late in the game—when it seems as though managing a far-flung empire requires truly imperial powers of concentration.

The game loses nothing in the way of excitement as the world progresses, thanks in part to 28 strategically timed inventions that create new opportunities for land development. For instance, Oil Drilling suddenly offers a new power source on previously barren land.

Your military and development units work from the main map screen, while all your other orders are gathered on a succession of four additional screens. Transport controls the types of items and quantities that are shipped from outlying regions to your main production centers. Industry allows you to commission ships, hire and train various personnel, improve your railroad infrastructure, and set production rates on a variety of materials and goods. Trade allows you to place, buy, and sell orders on the world commodity market. With Diplomacy, you check out all international relationships and make a few overtures of your own.

The diplomatic options let you see how nations feel about one another and what resources they produce.





For a complex strategy game based on resource allocation and military deployment, Imperialism is relatively easy to learn, thanks in large part to the way everything is clearly labeled and how each screen is reasonably designed. Six short (one to two turns each) tutorials step you lightly through the basics. Online help in the form of explanations and advice from your various "ministers" (just painted images, not talking heads) is also available from every screen.



Don't neglect the online help. Your opponents already know how to play the game, and they do it very well.

Imperialism's diplomacy features are superficially similar to other turn-based strategy games', such as Civilization II's. You can declare war, make peace, form alliances, and set up various levels of bribes and trade concessions. But Imperialism treats the relationships between its nations as fluctuating units based on power, trade activity, and military actions. As on the eve of World War I, these units are very fragile. A Great Power declaring war on a single Minor Nation can split the entire world into four or five blocs of hostile interests in a matter of moments.



You control your empire's military and industrial might from the Industrial Screen.

Military operations in Imperialism are rather slimmer than I'd like. Naval battles are resolved strategically, based on firepower, minus the involvement of players. Land conflicts involve several different kinds of units on a tactical battlefield, but without most of the realistic options wargamers enjoy. There's opportunity fire, but no charges, entrenchment, or bonuses for multiple attacks on a single unit. And the 2D painted visuals are among the least inspired I've seen in years.

This brings us to Imperialism's Achilles' heel: its looks. If graphical platforms hadn't evolved yet, Imperialism would still gain adverse comment for its washed-out colors, lack of visual detail, and generally unimaginative 2D artwork. Normally, this would lessen my playing enjoyment to the point of flickering extinction. But that's not the case here.

The primary culprit behind my sleeplessness is probably Imperialism's AI. It's among the best I've played against in quite some time. Your computer-driven opponents access the same information you do, develop land in identical fashion, and pay the same prices for infrastructure and military. You can't afford to do less than your best against this lot, unless you want to end up managing a quaint tourist port selling snow-filled globes.

There's no "personality" to shade Imperialism's AI. While in some respects this is regrettable—we all enjoy the illusion of snickering in a beaten enemy's face—it also makes good sense. Success isn't necessarily a matter of goals individualized by some broad idea of character or philosophy; it's a matter of *winning*. Imperialism's computerized opponents try to prepare for any eventuality, whether it's offering alliance, buying up the world's supply of horses, or launching a preemptive strike at your main city. Tough AI makes beating the game a real challenge on any difficulty level, although you do get extra resources in lower levels.

Imperialism is a well-balanced, exciting game of resource management, trade, diplomacy, and war that never plays the same way twice. And now, if you'll pardon me, I've got some sleep to catch up on. Right after I look one more time at this savegame file...

Scan the Trade Screen carefully for prices of scarce resources and potential profits for your goods.



IMPERIALISM

GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	A-
GRAPHICS:	C+
SOUND CHECK:	B
MULTIPLAYER:	B
OVERALL	A-

A random-world generator, great AI, and superb game balance more than compensate for lackluster graphics.

DEVELOPER:	Frog City
PUBLISHER:	SSI 800-234-3088
WEB:	www.mindscape.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P75, 16MB RAM, 100MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P100
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS ▼ Don't neglect your infrastructure in the early game. As your Engineer builds depots and ports, add to your merchant marine and increase your labor force and railroad capacity. Otherwise, your resources will pile up in the fields, and your trading partners will be unable to sell you goods. ▼ You don't conquer an entire enemy nation through one military engagement; you gain a single province. Be strategic in your choice of attack zones. Carving a nation in half cuts off your enemy from all rail links on the far side of his capitol. Grabbing a province with ample coal and iron mines prevents him from creating steel and building more combat units. Don't forget to blockade his ports! ▼ Wood is the most valuable resource in the early stages of play—and the hardest to find in quantity. Be sure to place a couple of depots right in the middle of large forests. ▼ The game appears to have occasional problems restoring higher resolutions after it switches to 640-by-480. My advice: Manually change resolutions yourself before play and after. ▼ Whether you buy 1 or 20 of a given item from a Minor Nation, the positive diplomatic effect is the same. On the other hand, if you buy a country's entire stock of one item, you keep that item (and the resulting benefits) from another Great Power. ▼ Be sure to create some depots within one square of each of your province's villages. Though you may not gain immediate advantages, this will spur internal growth and result in the gradual development of useful commodities. ▼ Build a strong army and navy whether you intend to be peaceful or a warlord. Even allied Major Powers will suddenly declare war on you if they see some nice provinces without any military defense.



Outpost 2

By Barry Brenesal



Armored combat on the plains of New Terra.

Outpost 2? Not really. Let's be clear about this from the start: Outpost 2 has nothing to do with the original. Outpost was a badly flawed attempt to do a resource management–based SimCity in outer space. Outpost 2 is a C&C/Warcraft clone, right down to its mix of resource gathering, structure and military unit building, and extensive combat.

The setting for Outpost 2 is New Terra. Two rival colonies, Eden and Plymouth, have formed, each with different approaches to the desert environment: should they use advanced terraforming or apply less invasive, conventional mining techniques? Eventually, Eden and Plymouth descend into an on-again, off-again war...all the while proceeding with their respective growth plans.

New game, new direction

You can play Outpost 2 by choosing from a series of basic options: to play Eden or Plymouth; starting out with a fully populated colony or with a spaceship to another planet; and at an easy, normal, or difficult level. Or you can play the game in campaign mode for either Plymouth or Eden. That takes you through 24 interconnected missions—alternating battle with colony growth—and adds the further peril of a deadly microbe accidentally unleashed by Eden into the environment.

Outpost 2 handles its graphics in unspectacular but attractive fashion, with an interface that features a top-down view of units and structures that you can click for commands and reports. (There's only one "view": any dazzling shots of spaceships and colony devastation are from noninteractive cinematic AVIs.) Twelve tutorials guide you through basic operations. You're also given a book-on-file that details how to win each scenario in the campaigns. The written documentation provides a complete discussion of structures, weapons, and mobile units.

The AI is good, and the missions are well designed. Combat is nicely balanced, with sides that aren't completely identical in capabilities. I'm particularly partial to Plymouth's Spiders, which not only repair your own units, but can also reprogram magnetically disabled enemy units to fight on your side.



Satellite surveillance gives you photos of the opposing camp.

My main gripe involves the way the game handles time. Most of these strategically oriented real-timers let you pause and study charts, reports, terrain, and units at your leisure, which makes sense when you consider the overwhelming amount of information the game supplies at any given moment. Your computerized opponent knows everything instantaneously, after all.

Outpost 2 doesn't do that, however. When you pause, it completely freezes your screen. Still more annoying is the difficulty involved in changing game speed according to the pressures of the moment. You have to press [G]ame, then [P]references, then click on Game Speed, then click on the arrow to finally get the speed changed.

Of course, because time is constant, none of this matters in a multiplayer environment—and Sierra is pushing SIGS (the Sierra Internet Gaming System) heavily. You can join up to five players in an Outpost 2 competition, playing one of five scenarios (Last One Standing, Space Race, and so on). Support is also provided for direct modem connections, null modem links, and LANs.

While I like Outpost 2, it's a little underwhelming and unimaginative next to similar products such as War Wind and War, Inc. Well balanced but conventional, it handles more awkwardly than several other recent real-time games due to a lack of simple on-the-fly speed-switching and a reasonable pause command. As a multiplayer game, it takes on additional excitement, but that's due to the number and quality of its human players, not exciting product factors.

Structures face many threats, from invasion to natural disaster.



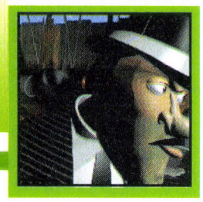
OUTPOST 2

GAMEPLAY:	C+
GETTING STARTED:	A-
GRAPHICS :	B-
SOUND CHECK:	B
OVERALL	**B-**
MULTIPLAYER:	**B+**

Competently executed, but this C&C/Warcraft twin lacks inspiration.

PUBLISHER:	Sierra On-Line 800-757-7707
WEB:	www.sierra.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 16MB RAM, 50MB HD
RECOMMENDED:	P133
STREET PRICE:	$60

TIPS ▼ Don't just play through the tutorials: play *in* them. After you finish a tutorial, experiment with the structures and buildings to see how they relate in ways not covered by the game documentation. ▼ Decent morale, like food, is essential for maintaining colony operations. (Bad morale = lots of deaths.) Research Environmental Psychology, then Health Maintenance, Seismology, and Emergency Response Systems as soon as possible. Build a Medical Research Center as soon as Health Maintenance is completed. ▼ Don't convert all your workers into scientists! Scientists assigned to nonscientific tasks lower morale, and their birth-rate is half that of standard workers. ▼ Although the campaign-mission briefings occasionally speak of trying to convince the other side to listen to reason, it's all fluff. Keep up your guard, monitor your opponent's military development, and launch tactical strikes to take out his most powerful threats.



Constructor

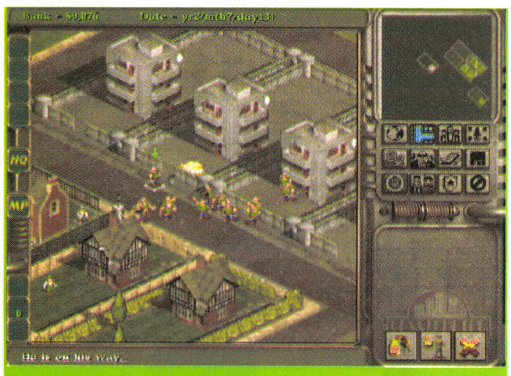
Time for some clowning around

By Daniel Morris

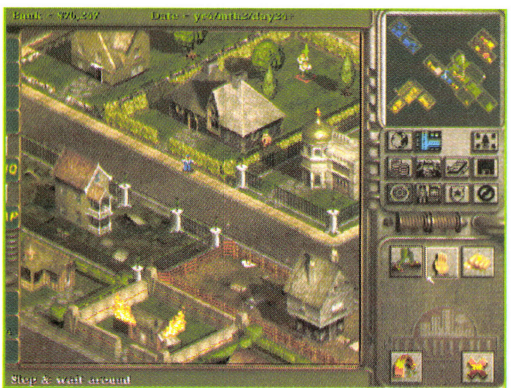
Imagine SimCity if, in the same weekend, both the Ringling Bros. circus and the Gambino crime family moved into town. Then you'll have some notion of the madness Constructor brings to the PC.

Constructor is a campy real-time sim that puts you in charge of a construction cartel with aims to span a very bizarre world. While it adopts a more cartoonish style than the likes of SimCity or Command & Conquer, Constructor flavors its fun with some sober elements: Rioting, rubouts, and razing all go hand in hand with the fun-house effect of a universe that looks like *Romper Room* with rivets.

The nuts and bolts of gameplay will be very familiar to anyone in the Warcraft II/C&C/SimCity loop. You begin with a limited pool of resources and workers and build rudimentary structures to get your business off and running. Everything is pretty simple—there's really not much more to the economics of Constructor than there was in the lemonade stands you operated as a kid.



The citizenry isn't always happy, as this riot attests. Not a great start for a utopian society.



Business as usual: a rival developer's house happens to burn down in a hotly contested neighborhood.

Oh, except for the Mafia.

Unless you grew up in a neighborhood so seedy that even the lemonade-stand kids owed kickbacks to the Don, you've never seen a place rowdier than Constructor. The mob boss looms over everything, and it's a wise idea to keep him sated with bribes if you don't want to run afoul of his good graces. Closer ties to the mob let you unleash wiseguys on your competitors, which gives you the handy option of busting out his establishments as he watches helplessly. Until he hires his own wiseguys, that is.



Bribing the mob will help ensure that you don't end up as a stone in someone's shoe.

The world's denizens are classed into two groups: Desirables and Undesirables. The Desirables are those foremen, workers, and rent-paying tenants who keep your coffers full and your structures built and occupied profitably. Undesirables are the rabble: drunken partygoers, clown thugs, and other assorted carnivalesque loonies. Building a police station helps, but you'll still have to shell out extra cash to repair the damage caused by uncontrollable Undesirables.

There are four modes to play in. Financial mode is a simple race for wealth: 40 years to accrue x amount of money—with no debts at the deadline. In Egomania, your goal is to build one type of every structure, culminating in the creation of a pyramid as a monument to, well, you. World Domination requires that you own at least one structure in each of the world's territories. And the hardest (and by far the most interesting) mode is Utopian Society, where the object is not only to build a powerful empire, but to keep 90 percent of the population happy at the same time.

The different play modes keep Constructor interesting for a lot longer than it otherwise would be. World Domination encourages slum-lordism as you race to expand territorially and let your tenants live in increasing squalor. The Utopian Society, of course, demands far more compassionate leadership. For example, you might want to actually consider providing law enforcement for your tenants. Y'know, basics.

Four players can go at it at once over network and modem, and for a while it's amusing to watch clowns terrorize a rival's neighborhood or skirt trouble with an unfriendly capo.

Before long, though, Constructor begins to wear you down. Gameplay isn't very deep, and once you master some of the basics of construction and deal-making, there isn't a lot of challenge left. It becomes piecework.

Given that SimCity 3000 looms on the horizon, Constructor doesn't seem destined to occupy a lot of hard-disk space in the coming months. It's an entertaining fun-house twist on real-time strategy, but unfortunately, that's all it is.

CONSTRUCTOR

GAMEPLAY:	C+
GETTING STARTED:	B-
GRAPHICS:	B-
SOUND CHECK:	C+
MULTIPLAYER:	C+

C+ OVERALL

Witty ideas can't save this game from getting tiresome fast.

PUBLISHER:	Acclaim 516-656-5000
WEB:	www.acclaimnation.com
PLATFORM:	DOS/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	486DX2/66, 8MB RAM, 1MB SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	Pentium, 16MB RAM
STREET PRICE:	$50

TIPS ▼ Skimp like a cheapskate in World Domination mode. You'd be surprised how thin you can stretch the public's patience when denying them fundamental services in your race to expand. ▼ Build a police station as soon as you're able, so there's at least some line of defense against ruffians. ▼ The bribe is the best tool with which to massage a mob boss. Keep up a steady bribery schedule and factor payoffs into your budget.

PLAY THE DEMO ON PC GAMES.EXE CD-ROM

EXPLORE THE 3RD DIMENSION

Beyond...
is another dimension
a dimension of sound
a dimension of sight
a dimension of mind



SOUND FORCE 680

3D Multimedia speaker system with QSound Virtual Audio provides the most extreme gaming experience

3D STRIKER

Full digital gaming keyboard with rotational 3D handle – ideal for first-person action games



PCMall 1-800-555-MALL

MicroWAREHOUSE® 1-800-367-7080

QuickShot®
www.quickshot.com

© 1997 QuickShot Technology, Inc. QuickShot is a registered trademark of QuickShot Patent (BVI) Ltd. SOUND FORCE 680 and 3D STRIKER are tradenames of QuickShot Patent (BVI) Ltd. QSound is a trademark of QSound Labs, Inc.

DOGDAY™

AN ADVENTURE

You're a dog in a dog eat dog world.

Where getting drunk as a dog and defeating the top dog, is so real your friends may have to stop you from chasing cats and drinking from the toilet bowl...



Features

- 64,000 color gaming world
- 360 degree seamless animated display
- Realistic style puzzles with sensible interaction
- Fully animated inventory system
- Incredible atmosphere that encompasses sight and sound

Grab a Demo here

www.impactgames.com

Published by

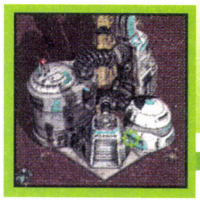
IMPACT Interactive Publishing Pty. Ltd.

"gameplay in Dogday is an exceptional piece of work"
"the atmosphere sucks you right in" • "real world style puzzles
"sensible interaction" • "beautifully rendered"
PC PowerPlay

Doing it is better than watching it!

To place an order, contact your local retailer or call 1-888-351-5969

Copyright 1996 Impact Interactive Publishing Pty Ltd. All rights reserved. Dogday is a trademark of Impact Interactive Publishing Pty Ltd. All rights reserved.

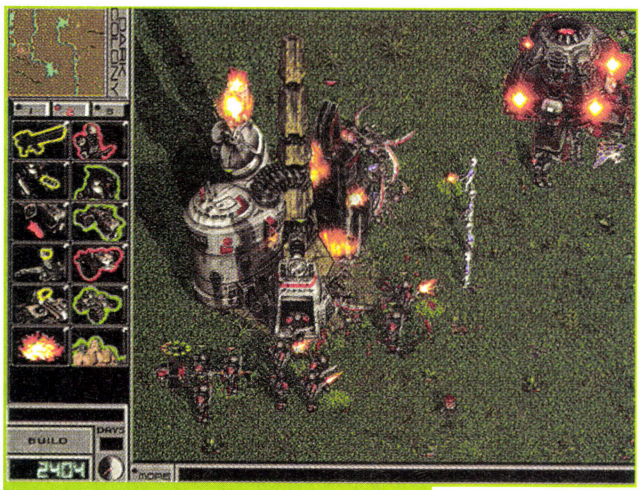


Dark Colony

War with gore

By Peter Olafson

My first thought regarding SSI's Dark Colony: Oh no, not another one. Personally, I'm less worried about the implications of geneticists cloning goats than those of computer-game designers churning out more variations on Command & Conquer. By some counts, around three dozen of these "real-time strategy games" will appear by year's end. No, you don't have to wait for the *Time* magazine cover: Creativity *is* dead.



Detailed structures and well-lighted explosions make this clone more appealing.

My second thought: Hey, for a Command & Conquer clone, this isn't too bad.

To be sure, Dark Colony—developed by Gametek under a deal struck prior to its acquisition by Take 2 Interactive—adds little to the C&C canon. The gameplay isn't...well, why do I even bother describing it? It's what you've seen time and again in other C&C clones. The story is...oh, never mind: It's set on a terraformed Mars, and you can play as the Humans or the alien Grays. The terrain types are yadda, yadda, and yadda.

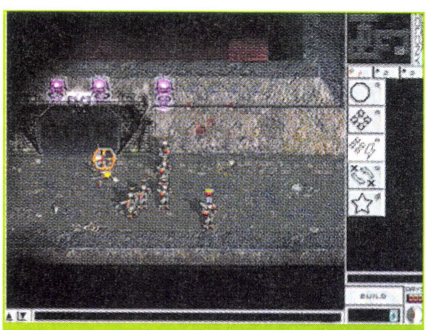
The real plus here is the artwork: It's sharp. The buildings look like little models. Most construction is forced into a tight, fixed cluster, which gives Dark Colony a Capture-the-Flag sensibility. The explosions have just the right sense of heat and unfettered chaos. Everything casts an accurate shadow. The animation is full of piquant detail: the way the barrager units (fearsome mobile artillery) lift up off their front wheels when firing, the way the tiny targeter atop the autonomous missile batteries turns to face a detected enemy, and the way a smoking missile snakes to its destination, for instance.

Moreover, the enemy AI has a steely edge. It doesn't fall into the old trap of sending units into combat piecemeal, so you'll frequently find yourself facing massed, well-organized enemy forces operating on land and in the air. It only adds to the atmosphere when you find them making good use of the change from day to night, effectively using spotters for artillery, and flaunting the ability to lay, detect, and clear mines.

And the progress of some of the 40-plus missions will surprise you. Objectives are rarely simple, and you'll often have to support an ally while keeping your own kit intact. (This sometimes works to your detriment: In one difficult mission, I wiped out the Grays' main hive only to learn that my erstwhile allies were attacking my home base.)

If multiplay's your thing, you'll be glad to know that the game supports a variety of options: TCP/IP, IPX network, modem, and serial play.

On the down side, Dark Colony is violent without a compelling reason—not so much in the game (which uses an overdone splattering-blood effect to indicate that units are engaged) as in the consistently gruesome cut-scenes. The number of unit types seems rather modest. (Why no waterborne craft?) And the absurd, intrusive music got itself turned off the moment I located the options menu. I'm not crazy about the anywhere/anytime saved-game system, either, which tends to diminish overall strategy and turn the focus to individual engagements.



Captured by the aliens, you'll need to free other prisoners and fight your way to freedom.



Fixed missile-launchers are especially useful for harassing aerial attackers (but also work on land-based enemies).

Basically, Dark Colony is a decent variation on a way-overdone theme. Talented people were clearly involved in this operation on many levels: artists, animators, AI script writers. So why is the overall concept so been-there-done-that?

Still, while originality is typically a prerequisite for brilliance, it's not a requirement for fun. Dark Colony isn't brilliant, but it's surprisingly fun—for a clone.

DARK COLONY

GAMEPLAY:	B-
GETTING STARTED:	B
GRAPHICS :	A-
SOUND CHECK:	B

B OVERALL

MULTIPLAYER: B

Bloody and unoriginal—but not without merit.

DEVELOPER:	Gametek
PUBLISHER:	SSI 800-234-3088
WEB:	www.ssionline.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 1MB SVGA, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	2MB SVGA
STREET PRICE:	$45

TIPS ▼ Some underhandedness is called for in destroying the Grays' main hive. The key: Don't destroy the hive entirely until you've also wiped out the undefended Stratus HQ and its attendant missile batteries, and positioned a strong occupying force of barragers around the foundation and a smaller, defensive force at your base. (You've probably long since exhausted the mission's available resources, so take as long as you like to build up to the necessary levels.) ▼ Now, blow the Grays' hive. Your own base will immediately be attacked and the Stratus HQ rebuilt, but your build-up should permit you to cruise to quick victories in each area. Send a unit to the bunker entrance in the region's southwest island to complete the mission.

THE DECKS ARE SEALED.

And, unless you're good, SO IS YOUR FATE.

Introducing Magic: The Gathering *Spells of the Ancients* **expansion set** for the PC.
More creatures. More spells. More ways to experience the thrill of Magic.

Intensify your Magic PC gameplay with the new exalted Sealed Deck Generator. ***Spells of the Ancients***™ now bestows rare and powerful cards like Juzám Djinn, Guardian Beast and Psionic Blast from the ***Unlimited***™, ***Arabian Nights***® and ***Antiquities***® card sets. Construct decks around new themes or fine-tune an existing one with multilands to impose a demoralizing defeat. Either way, ***Spells of the Ancients*** gives you over 130 new spells, creatures and abilities to steel your competitive spirit and crush your planeswalking foe.



Play over 130 new cards



Experience the thrill of opening starters and boosters



Build your deck for Sealed Deck tournaments



Requires Magic: The Gathering® for the PC

MAGIC The Gathering
SPELLS OF THE ANCIENTS

The Ultimate Magic Experience

Available on Windows® 95. Visit your local retailer or call: 1-800-695-GAME day or night (U.S. and CANADA)

MICROPROSE
www.microprose.com

© 1997 MicroProse Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. WIZARDS OF THE COAST, Magic: The Gathering, *Arabian Nights* and *Antiquities* are registered trademarks and *Unlimited* is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. © 1997 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Illustrations by Kaja Foglio and Mark Tedin. MICROPROSE is a registered trademark and SPELLS OF THE ANCIENTS is a trademark of MicroProse, Inc. or its affiliated companies. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.



Conquest Earth

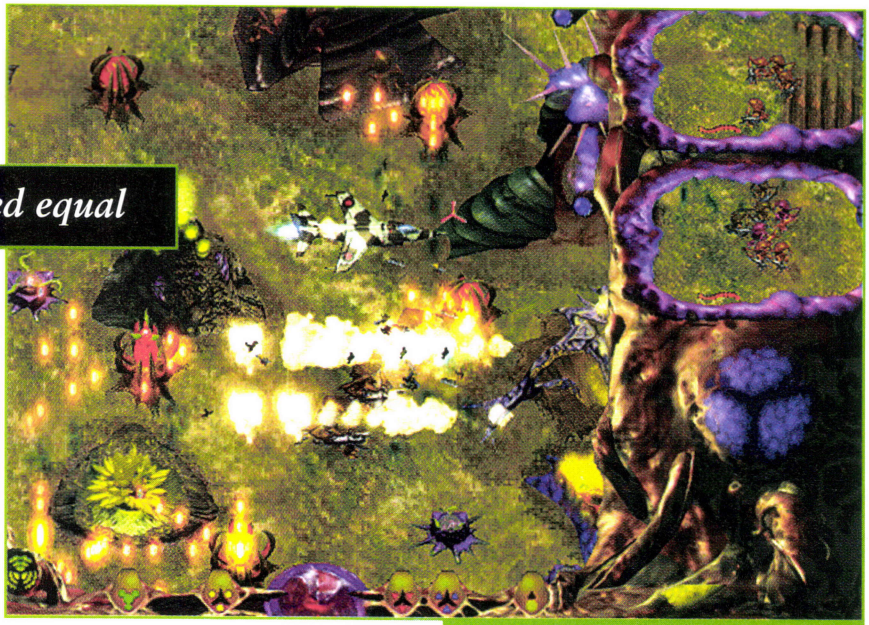
By Steve Klett

I didn't like C&C much. I know that's heresy among the legions of loyal GDI and NOD generals out there—and pretty much gamers in general. But while I loved C&C's concept and production values, the game just didn't grab me. I found it too repetitive and the AI too weak in solo play. I just wasn't compelled to play through to the end.

All C&C clones aren't created equal

That said, C&C's success has created a bevy of real-time strategy clones that's impossible to ignore. The latest—Eidos' Conquest Earth—has demanded my attention for nearly all the reasons C&C did not.

The story is set up beautifully in a gorgeous cinematic intro: In December 1997, NASA's *Galileo* space probe plunges into Jupiter's atmosphere—its "peaceful" mission, of course, is to send information back about the gaseous planet, which is now believed to be inhabited. And inhabited it is. However, Earth's probe carries with it a deadly virus that wipes out 85 percent of the planet's population. Thus, one of man's most ambitious projects in his quest for knowledge becomes an accidental act of war. Jupiter's citizens—gaseous lifeforms known as Jovians—trace the probe's origins to Earth and launch a massive offensive to conquer the planet before it conquers them.



The Harrier is a force to be reckoned with! Note the viewports in the upper right.

You, the player, have a choice to make. Do you fight to save humanity from the invading alien hordes, or do you take up the Jovian cause and help exact their revenge? It's up to you.

However, the choice to play as the Jovians should not be taken lightly: it actually requires you to *become* Jovian. The alien interface is organic—living, breathing, pulsating—and all its symbology is Jovian. At first I found this a bit daunting, but after an hour or two I was quite fluent in Jovian and rather liked this departure from the real-time norm. In another nice touch, the Fog of War in CE is either deadly sulfur clouds (when you're Human) or poisonous oxygen (when you're Jovian). You need to enlist special units to clear it out of the way.



Draw tanks away from the main forces and take them on one at a time.

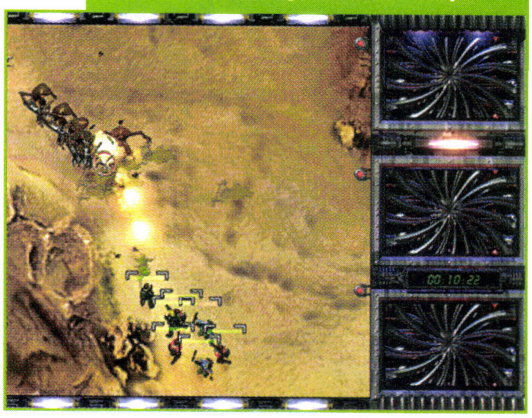
Once you've chosen your race, it's time to make another decision: mission or campaign game? The mission games are a series of single missions in which all "noncombat" decisions are handled for you. You're given a finite amount of resources and one or two objectives. Successful completion of missions leads to progressively more challenging missions, with new units to fight with—and against—introduced along the way. On the Easy level, there are just 15 missions per side, but play on either the Medium or Hard levels and you get 30 missions to conquer. Each mission can take as long as 30 to 45 minutes to complete, so there's a lot of gameplay in this mode alone.

In the campaign mode, you must make all the resource-building and allocation decisions. You choose what units to build first, where to put them, and where and when to commit them. Of course, your funds are limited, so you must choose wisely. In the Human campaign, you only need to defeat the invading Jovians on six occasions (that sounds much easier than it is—the gaseous goons have better technology with which to kill you, and there are a lot of the little critters). In the Jovian campaign, you need to complete 30 missions without losing six of them.

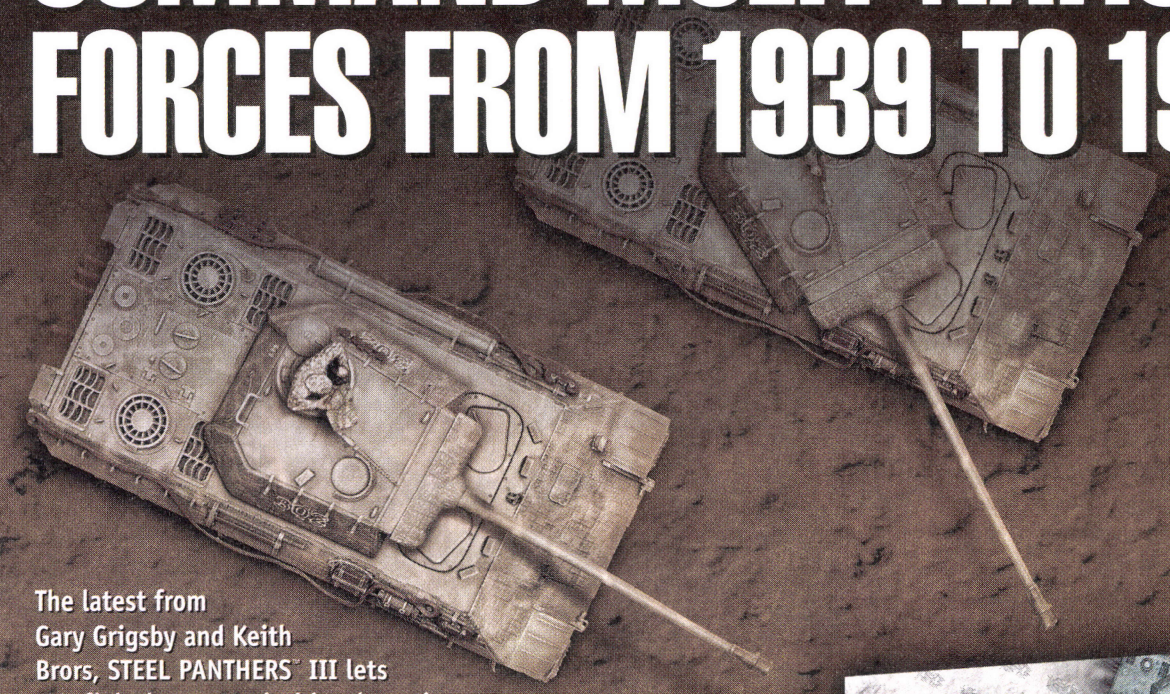
As in C&C, you view all the action from an overhead god perspective. You use the mouse to lasso units and give them commands. You can select groups of units and assign them hot keys, and you can give them a series of waypoints with a simple mouse-click as well.

In all, there are 29 Human and 13 Jovian units to command (buildings included). Human troops

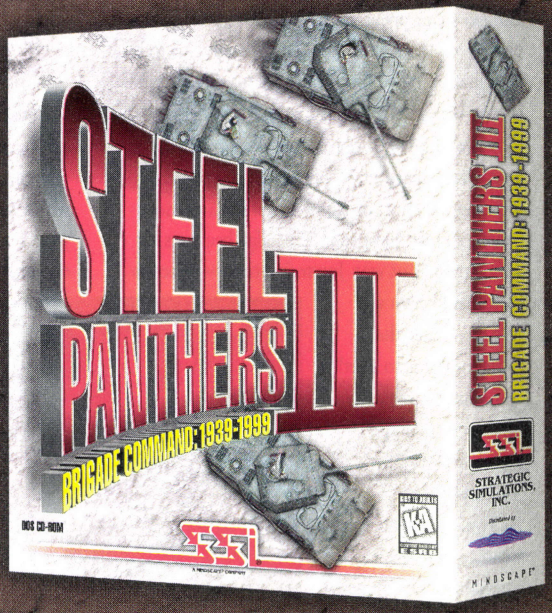
The AI's weak point is that it doesn't fan out its forces; rather, it storms a single point of attack. If you concentrate your fire, you can do a lot of damage with a few troops.

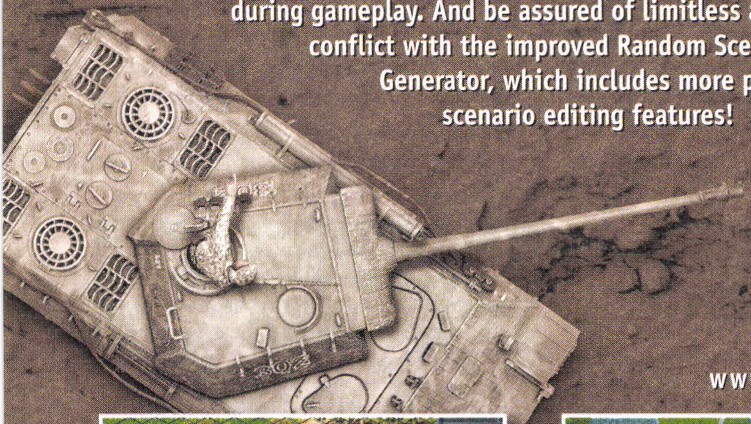


COMMAND MULTI-NATIONAL FORCES FROM 1939 TO 1999!



The latest from Gary Grigsby and Keith Brors, STEEL PANTHERS™ III lets you fight larger tactical battles using the same easy-to-use interface featured in STEEL PANTHERS I & II. This brilliant tactical wargame includes 6 campaigns and over 40 scenarios. Engage in brigade-size battles from virtually every major historical conflict from 1939 to date, plus hypothetical battles, such as NATO 1998 and Holy War 1999! New 200 yards-per-hex and platoon-size units allow you to control entire brigades — even divisions! Get key reinforcements during gameplay. And be assured of limitless armored conflict with the improved Random Scenario Generator, which includes more powerful scenario editing features!









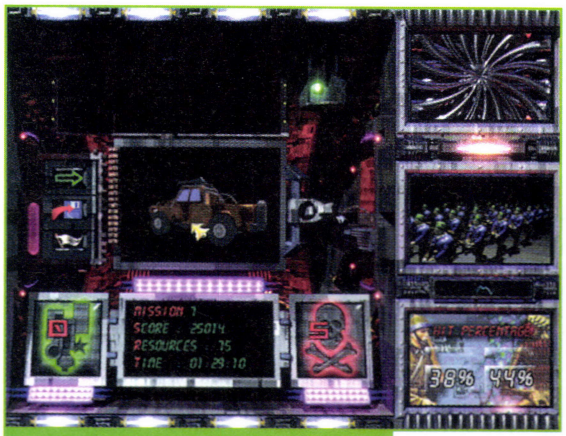
DOS CD-ROM
www.ssionline.com

To order: Visit your retailer or call 1-800-234-3088 with Visa/MC (North America only).

SSI®
A MINDSCAPE® COMPANY

©1997 Strategic Simulations, Inc., a Mindscape company. All rights reserved. STEEL PANTHERS is a trademark of Strategic Simulations, Inc. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



After each mission, you find out exactly how well, or poorly, you did.

range from ordinary riflemen to grunts with flamethrowers, mortars, and bazookas. Then there are tanks, a helicopter, and a Harrier jet (they're drawn to scale, so battles look and play much more realistically than in C&C). The proton rifle–toting Walkers are the backbone of the Jovian forces, but you can morph them into their organic versions of tanks and airplanes (a very cool process to witness). You can also give the Walkers force shields, morph them into rocks, or even make them invisible for sneak attacks and ambushes. (That said, I would've liked more units to command on the Jovian side.)

While the gameplay methods in Conquest Earth are familiar, C&C veterans will notice a vast difference in the play style from the get-go. Almost as soon as you start a given mission, you'll have enemy forces probing your lines for weak spots and launching major offensives of their own.

Sure, you have to build your base (you start with a power supply; the rest is up to you), but the emphasis is on combat and strategic placement of base resources and defenses, rather than on resource management. All the units in CE are constructed much faster than in C&C, and the action is correspondingly fast and furious. There are no resources to mine to build the units you need: instead, you start off with a set amount of funds and decide how to spend them.

In terms of troop movement, you can give your little guys three advanced offensive and defensive orders. You can tell them to Rampage (destroy the closest enemy units—only available on Easy); Seek & Destroy (hunt and kill a selected target—ignoring all other targets and their own defense); and Hunt (same as Seek & Destroy, except they'll defend themselves). Defensive orders include Escort (protect a selected unit as it moves from point A to point B, for example); Guard (exactly what it says); and Assist/ Help (units remain stationary in semi-guard mode and will rush to aid comrades under attack).

While the AI is good overall, your units are a little on the helpless side when left on their own. Still, when used in conjunction with waypoints, the advanced orders make complicated, multipronged attacks possible, and they bring a whole new dimension to the C&C-type experience.

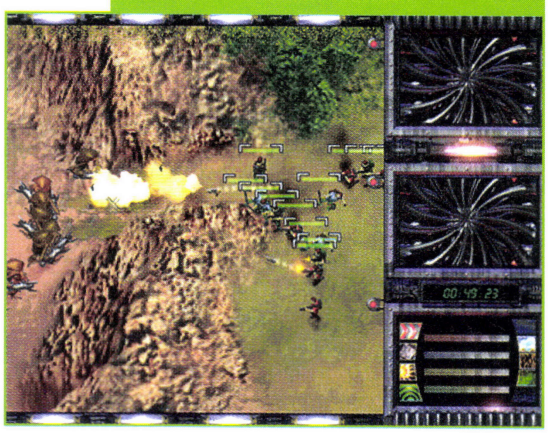
But I've saved CE's best—and most unique—feature for last: You can control individual units! Right-click twice on any unit and you *are* that unit—you control its movement, aim, and fire (this is especially fun and effective with the Human Harrier jet, tanks, and the Jovian Glider). Lasso a group of troops, and you can control their movements and firing as well. Often, your direct control of units can and will sway the course of battle. On many occasions, I was down to my last few men but was able to carry the day by stepping into their shoes.

The only area in which Conquest Earth really fell short was in the Campaign mode: I always felt a little lost as to what to do, and there's no tutorial to help you out. I think the developers bit off a little more than they could chew in this regard, but at the same time, it's nice to have the Campaign mode as an option. The multiplayer requirement of always needing to have an Alien vs. Human matchup is a slight bummer as well—the opportunity to pit the Jovians against themselves would've been a bonus. The game's technical fireworks (65,000 colors allow lots of cool special effects) also raise the game's recommended requirements to a *slightly* unreasonable level.

For these reasons, Conquest Earth falls just short of an A. Nevertheless, it's a helluva first effort, and receives a hearty "Che-toh so' ma de loc!" That's Jovian for "Major Thumbs Up!"



CE is a graphical masterpiece—every Jovian unit and organic structure animates.



The humans use a narrow pass to grind up a horde of Jovians.

CONQUEST EARTH

GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	C-
GRAPHICS:	A+
SOUND CHECK:	A-
OVERALL	B+
MULTIPLAYER:	B

A refreshing take on real-time strategy.

DEVELOPER:	Data Design Interactive
PUBLISHER:	Eidos Interactive
WEB:	www.eidos.com
PLATFORM:	DOS/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 16MB RAM, 215MB HD, 1MB SVGA, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P166, 32MB RAM, 2MB/4MB video RAM
STREET PRICE:	$60

TIPS ▼ Always build barracks or a hive first, and start building troops in a hurry—you'll be attacked before you know it. ▼ Assign groups of units to the five hot-keys ASAP (Shift + 1 to 5). Set up one under the guard command at your base, and have another patrol a path (use waypoints) around your perimeter. ▼ Get the communication building for your race next, and use it to set up video windows that monitor likely points of enemy attack. I usually set one up to keep an eye on my power station, because, chances are, if you lose that, it's over, baby. ▼ A couple of Pulsars or a single Glider will make mincemeat out of a single tank. ▼ Control the Harrier, helicopter, tanks, and Glider yourself whenever possible. Also, a single bazooka grunt under your control can take out multiple Sentries. ▼ The Jovians will overwhelm you if you engage them in the open. Pick narrow valleys or bridges to make your stand.

WAR WIND™ II

HUMAN ONSLAUGHT

It's Not Just For Aliens Anymore.

WINDOWS® 95 CD-ROM

WWW.WARWIND.COM

Many years after the great conflict, much has changed on Yavaun. Humans, reluctant colonists, are now part of the cultural diversity of this alien world.

WAR WIND™ II: HUMAN ONSLAUGHT offers new, larger vehicular and mechanized units. All-new maps with improved terrain graphics. Streamlined game play in building and promoting your units. All this, plus the unpredictable human element, makes WAR WIND II much more than just a sequel.

It's a whole new game.





To Order: Visit your retailer or call 1-800-234-3088 (USA & Canada) with Visa or MasterCard.

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Developed by DREAMFORGE®

SSI®

A MINDSCAPE® COMPANY

War Wind is a trademark of Strategic Simulations, Inc. ©1997 Strategic Simulations, Inc., a Mindscape Company. All rights reserved. Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

Dr. Drago's Madcap Chase



If you play your cards right, you may be able to roll the dice with a five-reel slot machine.

Dr. Drago's Madcap Chase mingles bits of *The Great Race* with Mille Bornes, Monopoly, and Where in Europe is Carmen San Diego?—with some surprisingly pleasant results.

The idea behind this computer board game from Blue Byte's Play Byte budget line is to reach a series of European destinations before your opponents (up to seven of them), while making a pile of money along the way. Once the stages are complete, players are scattered around Europe for the final Master Rally to Brussels.

Monopoly of Life. Kinda.

You activate a one-armed bandit to determine your roll, then head off across a lively animated landscape in a tiny car (which will turn into a plane over some stretches). Depending on where you land—the routes are many—you may collect or buy one of a wide range of "feature" cards. These give you special abilities, from typical move-again instructions to more devious opponent-bashing privileges. You're also permitted to buy or sell properties, receive money, or pay a penalty. Random events occur as well, and the moody, predatory doc himself may start using your account to pay his bills.

The computer's a nice medium for Dr. Drago. It's hard to imagine anyone being able to resist the small, bright graphics and animations—windmills turning, fish jumping, smokestacks smoking, tails wagging—and the music-hall score. And the game is very accessible: they've avoided turning it into a great tottering stack of features. It might have been nice if a set of feature cards was included in the box, though, for ready reference.

Granted, Dr. Drago's not really sophisticated enough to appeal to older audiences. But I can imagine the younger set having a high old time on a rainy Saturday afternoon. This Doctor is in.

—Peter Olafson

DR. DRAGO'S

GAMEPLAY:	B-
GETTING STARTED:	B
GRAPHICS:	B
SOUND CHECK:	B-
OVERALL	B-
MULTIPLAYER:	B

An entertaining board game that you'll want to play with friends sitting around one machine.

PUBLISHER:	Play Byte 800-933-2983
WEB:	www.bluebyte.com
PLATFORM:	Win CD
REQUIRES:	486/66, 4MB RAM, 2MB HD, VGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	Pentium, 8MB RAM, 15MB HD
STREET PRICE:	$13

Yendor 3: The Tyrants of Thaine

Blast from the past



Say hello to the dwarven welcoming committee.

There's a subset of games out there being quietly produced by programmers who want nothing to do with corporate publishers and the latest technologies. These products look and sound old-fashioned, but often provide solid value.

Yendor 3 is a good, recent example of this genre. It's a fantasy RPG very much in the Might and Magic III mold, though without the finer graphical effects and music found in NWC's still-popular product. The animations are simpler and the artwork is cruder. On the gameplay front, the castle you create in Yendor 3 has guilds that can be gradually developed to very high levels, complete with some very important goodies. By contrast, the castle you were able to build in Might and Magic IV only offered standard services.

As in the recent Might and Magic games, there are two basic spell lists for mage and clerical types. Six of the available professions can cast spells to different degrees. Your Yendorian party contains four characters, varied by 6 statistics and 12 skill ratings. Starting as mere tyros, they'll gain experience, train, and ultimately end up as level 40+ world-beaters.

There are 71 monster types to defeat—everything from Acoknights to Wizards—each with its own strengths and weaknesses. You'll find plenty of mazes, hidden rooms, teleportals, and password-protected doors just begging to be explored. Those who live through these encounters will discover a varied selection of artifacts, potions, scrolls, and magically enhanced weaponry.

Shareware versions of Yendor 3 (available for download from the Web site below) contain fully playable versions of a portion of the game. Registered copies include an in-game cluebook that lists all monsters, artifacts, weapons, and maps, and contains a complete walkthrough.

Is Yendor 3 outdated? Depends on your point of view. It's certainly less sophisticated and interactive than many recent RPGs. But it's also fun to play, well-balanced, and easy on computer resources. You don't need 16MB of RAM or a hardware-accelerator card—just an imagination and a love for the fantasy genre.

—Barry Brenesal

THE TYRANTS OF THAINE

GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	B
GRAPHICS:	C-
SOUND CHECK:	C-
OVERALL	B
MULTIPLAYER:	N/A

Visually and aurally dated, but it's got lots of traditional battles, magic, and sword-swinging—and good game balance.

PUBLISHER:	Webfoot Technologies 630-257-1224
WEB:	www.webfootgames.com
PLATFORM:	DOS 5.0/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	386DX (!), 2MB RAM, 21MB HD, CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	486, 4MB RAM
STREET PRICE:	$25

Cuss Pack



For better or worse, the "F" word's arrived. Available exclusively from Interplay's Web site, the Cuss Pack add-on for Redneck Rampage replaces that 3D shooter's default speech-bites with a selection

Ya @#$%*/# rascal!

of, uh, vigorous language that would make Duke Nukem blush.

Taste forbids repeating even the non–explicitly profane lines. Xatrix has shown little restraint in assembling (out of outtakes from rocker Mojo Nixon's original-game recording sessions) this ode to free speech, and the cussin' version results in a much more authentic voice track than the comparatively banal one that shipped with the game. True to hillbilly stereotypes, the Cuss Pack hones the game's crazy edge.

On the other hand, loading in the barrage of curses did seem to halt the action in some spots. After a couple of cuss-enabled levels, though, I found the words blending into their context and losing their power to offend—which may have been what the developer intended all along.

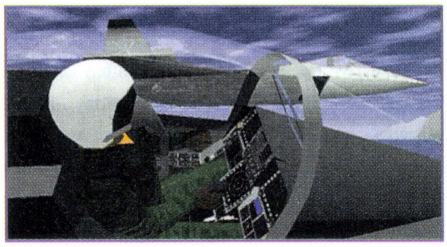
—Peter Olafson

DEVELOPER: Xatrix
PUBLISHER: Interplay 800-468-3775
WEB: www.interplay.com/redneck
STREET PRICE: $1–$2.75 (not counting time spent online)

B+ OVERALL

Jetfighter III: Enhanced Campaign

Millions more miles to fly



Jetfighter III has just had its wings lengthened, and to good effect. This Enhanced Campaign CD adds two new campaigns, with some 5 million square miles of richly appointed territory and 70-plus missions.

It's not simply bigger. Devotees will also appreciate inclusion of the F-14 Tomcat fighter; an accompanying long-range missile; an autopilot function; control over flaps; a range of new views; and the ability to reassign functions to joystick controls.

Alas, multiplay still isn't supported, and the update still seems slightly slow at full detail on a P200 MMX system. Fortunately, scenery does appear to load faster under a new compression system, and Mission did recently release a patch adding 3D-accelerator support.

Perhaps the forthcoming, feature-filled Platinum Edition will clear up any lingering issues. In the meantime, the ECCD is a solid addition to a solid sim. Light 'em up!

—Peter Olafson

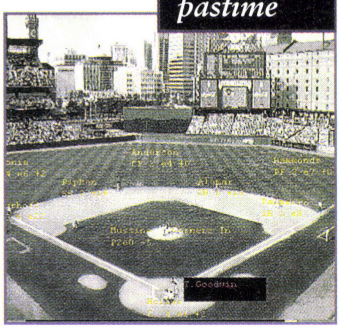
PUBLISHER: Mission Studios 800-969-4263
WEB: www.missionstudios.com
STREET PRICE: $30

B OVERALL

Strat-O-Matic 2.0

Text-based national pastime

PC GAMES A LIST



The best of the pure-stat baseball games has just carved another notch on its bat. New features in version 2.0 take this splendid rendition of the no-longer-so-great American pastime to a new level.

Computer-operated teams have always seemed rather docile in Strat. They could build lineups and rotations, but a sense of an ongoing, living entity was missing. Now, v. 2.0 finally allows computer managers to trade and to offer proposals to human managers.

A new record book imparts a stronger sense of history; helpful comparison modes use graphical displays; and the game log breaks out a player's day-to-day performance. The textual play-by-play, already impressive, is now deeply context-sensitive.

A few of the new features do need fleshing out. Stadiums appear in black-and-white unless you buy a $28 add-on disc, for example. But in fairness, Strat's never tried to compete with the big glossy baseball games. It's in a league of its own…and leading it.

—Peter Olafson

PUBLISHER: Strat-O-Matic Game Company 800-645-3455
WEB: www.strat-o-matic.com
PLATFORM: Win CD
STREET PRICE: $50 w/out player cards, $62 w/cards; update from v. 1.0 $25/$37

A– OVERALL

Chewy: Esc from F5



No, it's nothing to do with a gummy computer keyboard, but a good deal to do with the slightly out-of-kilter graphic style of Day of the Tentacle.

In this budget-line graphic adventure, you control a hot-pink, buck-toothed alien as he puzzles his way through five scenarios set in space and on Earth.

Kiddie-style on budget

Chewy's supposed to be a comedy, but the game's sometimes-juvenile humor and slapstick cut-scenes didn't strike me as funny. Nor is Chewy himself the most compelling character, with his irritating, piping voice.

However, there's enough to the game that you'll be at least broadly entertained. It's thorough—Chewy issues spoken observations on almost everything in sight (and a few things that aren't). Thankfully, the puzzles are mostly rational. They're simple enough that you won't complain about the docs being on the CD. And, rarity of rarities, it's supposed to run on a 486/33 with 4MB of RAM.

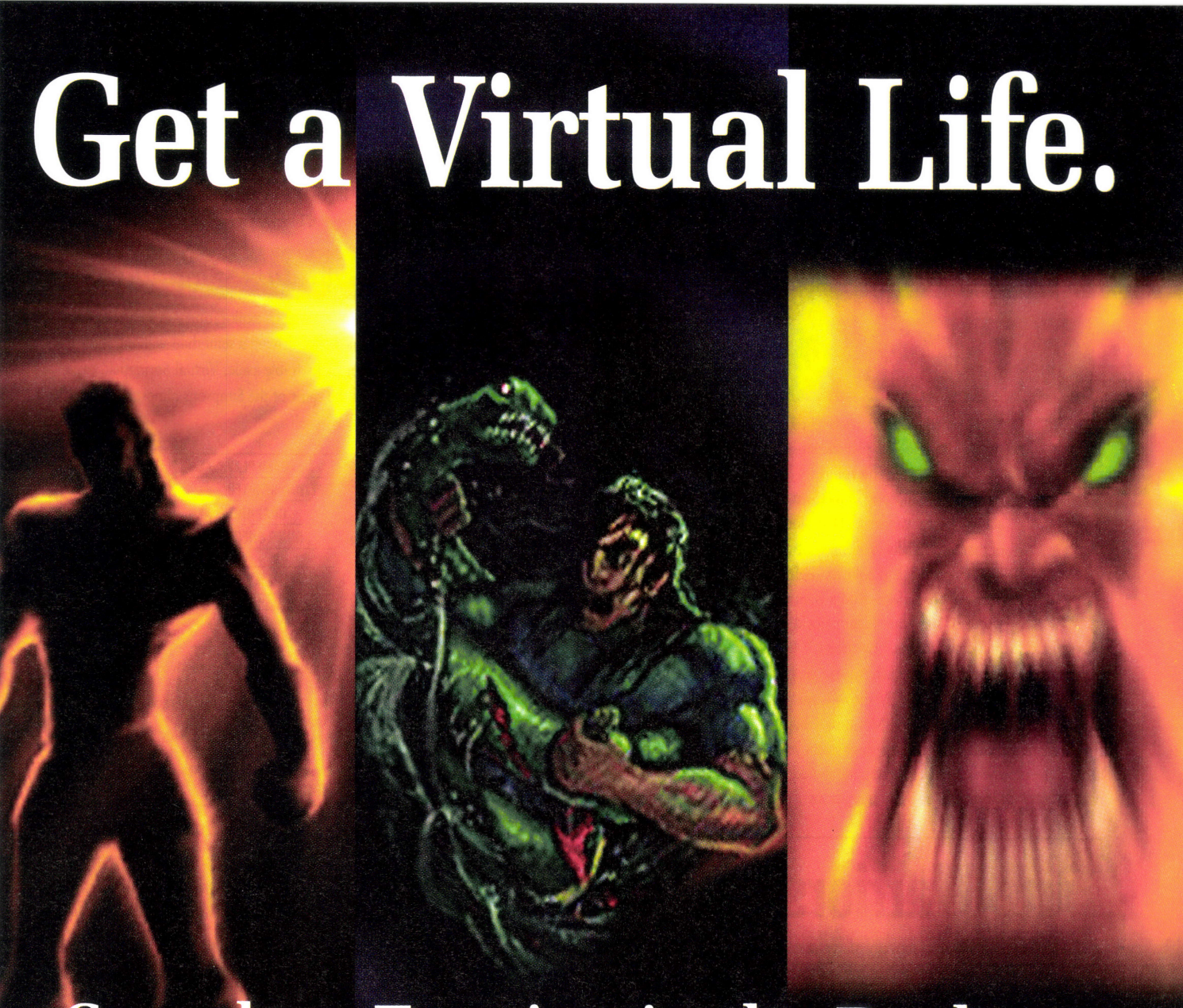
My biggest problem was the game's penchant for giving up read errors when accessing the options menus. Maybe a bigger install than 18MB would have helped?

—Peter Olafson

PUBLISHER: Play Byte 800-933-2943
WEB: www.blue byte.com
PLATFORM: Win 95 CD
STREET PRICE: $13

C– OVERALL

Get a Virtual Life.



Spend an Evening in the Realm.

Download the
FREE DEMO at www.sierra.com/realm

The Realm

On-Line Multiplayer Adventure Game

©1997 Sierra On-Line, Inc. ® and/or TM designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved.

Virtual Springfield



Get the inside scoop on Mayor "Diamond Joe" Quimby.

PC GAMES A LIST

The writers of Fox's irreverent *The Simpsons* love to play games—the head kind. This romp through the Simpsons' hometown allows you to wander a 3D version of that locationally challenged city, meet its people, and poke through their personal effects. And it is, in the words of 104-year-old Springfield billionaire C. Montgomery Burns, "Ex-cellent!"

After a brief introduction (which is variable, like the blackboard and sofa on the TV show) from washed-up Springfield actor Troy McClure, you're free to roam. A point-and-click interface steers you around the network of streets—attracting the odd not-so–bon mot from passersby, ranging from Marge Simpson's bad-tempered twin sisters, Patty and Selma, to career criminal Snake. Familiar locations can be entered and explored; generic ones can't. The show's look has been preserved, as has a fair approximation of its fluid animation.

Indoors, Virtual Springfield finds its center. You can prompt Bart to make crank calls to Moe the Bartender, spray holy water at the knick-knacks on the Flanders' bar, play arcade-game parodies at Noiseland, check the personal files of Kennedyesque mayor "Diamond Joe" Quimby, and on and on and on.

You can even find the remains of Springfield's monorail and its other follies: the popsicle-stick skyscraper, the Escalator to Nowhere, and the giant magnifying glass. If it's been on the show, there's an excellent chance it's in Virtual Springfield.

There's no real object save to explore and have fun, and pretty much everything is open to you. (Access to certain locations—like Krusty the Klown's office, the bottom drawer of Grandpa Simpson's dresser, and the view through Principal Skinner's telescope—require you to find certain objects.)

If I have a complaint, it's that the restrictions of the angular, block-by-block movement don't lend themselves well to exploration—in some respects, it's more like driving a semi than walking. But that rather picky foible aside, Virtual Springfield captures the spirit of the Simpsons almost as well as the show itself.

—Peter Olafson

Gaming: Ohhhhhh.....

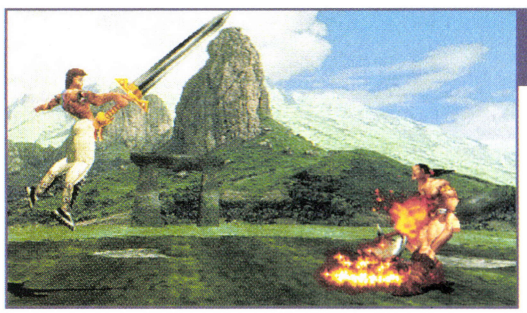
VIRTUAL SPRINGFIELD

GAMEPLAY:	A-
GETTING STARTED:	A
GRAPHICS:	A-
SOUND CHECK:	A-
OVERALL	A-
MULTIPLAYER:	D'OH!

¡Ay caramba! Even Krusty would like this.

PUBLISHER:	Fox Interactive 800-454-2637
WEB:	www.foxinteractive.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P75, 8MB RAM, 1MB HD, 4x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	16MB RAM
STREET PRICE:	$30

Time Warriors



Careful—you're gonna put someone's eye out with that thing.

Good 3D graphics, so-so movement, creative special moves, and challenging opponents—what more could a warrior ask for? Oops, my mistake. There's no blood in Time Warriors, but if you don't need to see the spine ripped out of your opponent's body—or even worse, your own—you'll find that this game offers some solid fighting.

Time Warriors doesn't even pretend to have a plot. Here's the simple background scenario: The Earth is in a state of anarchy, resulting from the big Cataclysm in the year 2000. Ten immortal warriors have come to do battle in order to obtain complete domination over the planet.

3D combat the console way

In single-player mode, you fight as any of the 10 duelists. Each comes from a different culture and period, hence the Time Warriors moniker. One warrior is Molloch the Barbarian, hefting an ax, while Hysis wields two sabers and hails from ancient Egypt. You can also play against a live opponent via IPX or a null-modem cable. There is, alas, no play over modem or TCP/IP connections.

So far, all this is old hat, right? But the nifty graphics make Time Warriors worthy of notice. Attractive backdrops—including undulating water in which you can drown your opponent—look impressive. Adjustable rotating camera-angles give you the impression of full network coverage of your battle.

The warriors' movements are relatively fluid, and the control is pretty good. And when your opponents start to seem like cream puffs, remember, you can move up through four additional levels of difficulty.

I should note that I did have some trouble getting the sound to work on one of our test systems, which used a Sound Blaster AWE64. Tech support was limited to the suggestion that the game doesn't "fully" support the AWE64.

If—apart from the decent graphics and sound effects—Time Warriors sounds like a "been there, done that," Mortal Kombat sort of thing, you're absolutely right. But the game's price may pique the interest of those who haven't already used up all their combative impulses.

—Sam Marshall

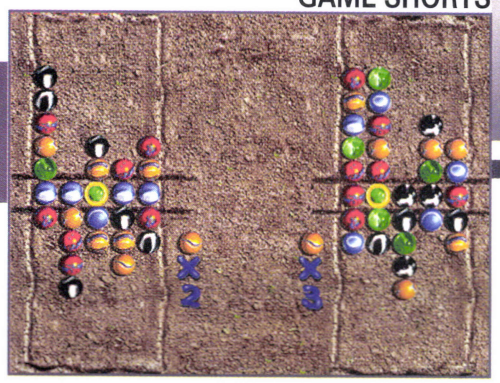
TIME WARRIORS

GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	C
GRAPHICS:	A-
SOUND CHECK:	B
OVERALL	C+
MULTIPLAYER:	C

More of the same in the beat-'em-up category.

DEVELOPER:	Silmarils
PUBLISHER:	Malofilm Interactive 514-844-4555
WEB:	www.malo.com
PLATFORM:	DOS 6.2/Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P90, 8MB RAM, 19MB HD, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	P133, 16MB RAM, 102MB HD, 8x CD-ROM drive
STREET PRICE:	$30

Lose Your Marbles



Looks innocuous enough, but Marbles can make you sweat.

What you feel: extreme pressure. What you see: blurred action. What you hear: intense, energetic music. What happens to your brain: total meltdown. What is it? The most addictive Tetris-style game I've seen yet.

You get a false feeling of security when you're introduced to it by the Marble Man, the silly-looking, M&M-like character who leads you through the game setup. Then get to it, 'cause the marbles start dropping, and they aren't gonna wait for you.

Your goal is to eliminate marbles by matching the five different colors in rows of three or more. Move your marbles up, down, or sideways within the Pitch Line. Terminate them as fast as you can, and watch to make sure your columns don't get too long, or you won't be able to move them and will have to work even harder.

Stop, drop, 'n' roll



Match the special steel marbles, and you'll stuff your opponent.

It's best to try to reach the maximum five-match—tricky because once you've matched three, they disappear. The solution: start by matching two on each side, then add a middle marble. This trick'll get rid of your marbles faster, plus it'll add marbles to the computer's side. Just watch out—he can do the same to you. (Marbles also lets you play a buddy head-to-head on one machine or over a LAN.)

The graphics aren't bad. The marbles have a psychedelic look, as well as a good rolling effect, corresponding to realistic sound effects. The backgrounds (grass, sand, a playground, and a few others) aren't much to talk about, but at least they let you see what you're doing. As for the music, it's a great panic-inducer for your reflexes, but there aren't any extra soundtracks to play. Bummer. —*Amy Crigger*

LOSE YOUR MARBLES

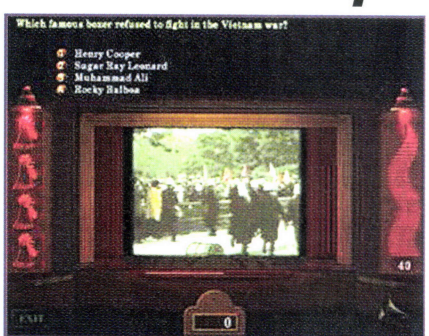
GAMEPLAY:	B
GETTING STARTED:	A
GRAPHICS:	B
SOUND CHECK:	B-
OVERALL	**B**
MULTIPLAYER:	**B**

Infectious.

DEVELOPER:	Captivasion
PUBLISHER:	SegaSoft 888-734-2763
WEB:	www.segasoft.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	P60, 8MB RAM, 1MB SVGA
RECOMMENDED:	Trident video card
STREET PRICE:	$20

20th Century Trivia Challenge

Reel history

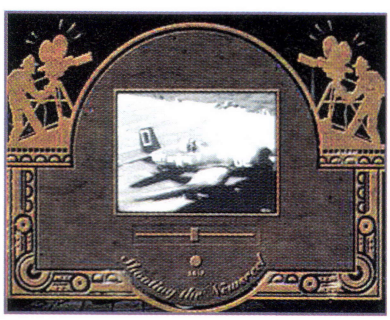


This one's for history buffs.

Get out of the way! It's another trivia game! Hold it. What's that, you say? It's not another take-off of You Don't Know Jack? And it has questions you can actually answer?

In its two-CD package, 20th Century Trivia offers over 3,000 trivia questions along with over 500 clips of landmark-history footage. So if you've ever watched the news, surfed the Web, or read a newspaper or magazine, you'll be able to answer at least one of the questions this game throws at you. It's not terribly tough: most high school students will be able to answer freely with a little help from their recent history classes.

With an English-accented host, sound coming from a gramophone, and an old-time movie theater, this game is off to an intriguing start. The host, quite amusing in a refined British sort of way, leads you through the game, poking fun at your mishaps and rewarding your triumphs. It's not the outlandish humor you get with another well-known trivia game, but it'll still make you chuckle. You'll be asked to answer questions on topics from the Vietnam War to the Gulf War, from O.J. Simpson to Elvis. This game can be played by yourself if you want a little beef-up on your 20th-century history, or you can use the multiplayer mode to add a little competition.



What makes 20th Century stand out is its theater's movie screen, upon which images of the past are shown, offering hints. These real-life clips, taken from the archives of the Pathé News and the BBC, show such footage as the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and, more distantly, Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon. Still, while the clips give the game a somewhat compelling feel, the interface is, sadly, uninspired. —*Amy Crigger*

TRIVIA CHALLENGE

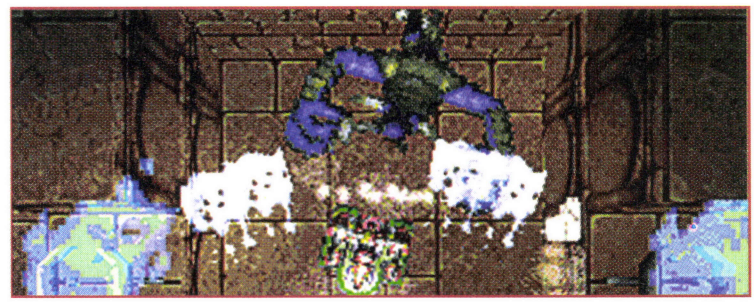
GAMEPLAY:	C
GETTING STARTED:	A
GRAPHICS :	B-
SOUND CHECK:	B-
OVERALL	**C**
MULTIPLAYER:	**C**

Frames modern history in a nostalgic, playable package.

DEVELOPER:	TelStar Electronic Studios
PUBLISHER:	Sir-tech 800-447-1230
WEB:	www.sir-tech.com
PLATFORM:	Win 95 CD
REQUIRES:	486DX 66, 10MB HD, 16MB RAM, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive
RECOMMENDED:	32,000-color monitor
STREET PRICE:	$30

STRATEGY & TACTICS CHEATS

All hail and bow down before the awesome power of the Holy Cheat! This month: an assortment to ace that match, fix that car, and kill 'em all with utter ease. We've done the work: all you have to do is type. Do it!



Tennis Elbow

Enter these codes/combos during gameplay:

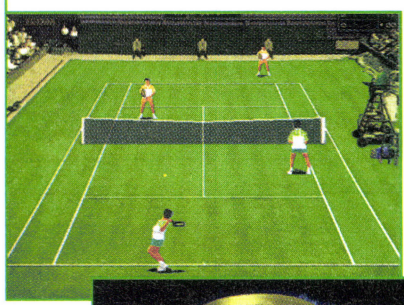
mtkil: Win the match.

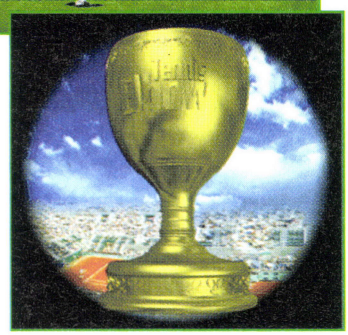
mtwin: Win the current set.

mtbal: Increase the ball size.

mtrun: Run faster.

[Spacebar] + Right Shift + (-): Win all points.





QUICK BITS

Betrayal in Antara

Add three more codes to the ones we gave last issue (**Gotta have magic**: Aren learns all spells; **Why am I so dull**: Maxes character traits; **Some call me Tim**: Destroys all enemies). There's also **Ask a Glass of Water**: Teleports party to beginning of chapter; **Man Does My Leg Hurt**: Heals party; and **Supermarket for the Rich**: Access good items. All six cheats can be activated by hitting **Ctrl + Shift + Z**, then typing the cheat.

Triple Play '98

At the team-selection screen, press **1, 2, 1, 2, Ctrl** to gain access to team #33, Electronic Arts' Dream Team.

Machine Hunter

At the Password screen, enter one of the following passwords:

****URANUS****: Unlimited continues.

****SATURN****: View end movie.

SHOWCREDIT: Shows credits.

LAZYPLAYER: All pickups.

GET SACKED: Fight bosses only.

SHOWDROIDS: Old intro movie.

NO MISSION: Activates exit areas without your needing to complete goals.

GRIMREAPER: One-shot kills.

2UNLIMITED: Weapons upgrades won't run out.

INVINCIBLE: Makes you invincible.

???HOST???: Lets you access CHEATS and VIEW BIO from the main menu.

Carmageddon

Type these cheats during gameplay:

bigbottom: Bodywork trashed.

superhoops: Explosive peds.

igloofun: Hot rod.

goggleplex: Underwater ability.

spamfritters: Free repair.

spamforrest: Instant hand-brake.

intheloft: Drugs.

buyournextgame: Jelly suspension.

chickenfodder: Bouncy.

funnyjam: Turbo peds.

tramsaresuper: Pedestrian harvest.

islandrules: Vesuvian vorpses.

smalludders: Giant peds.

givemelard: Lots of money.

boysfromthebush: Grip tires.

spamspamspamspam: Peds glued to ground.

hamstersex: Blind peds.

ilovenobby: See peds on map.

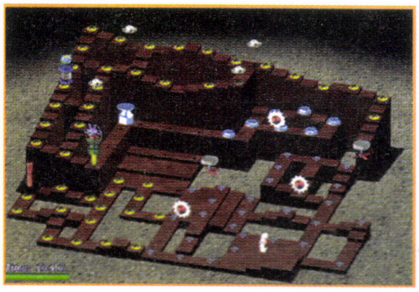
russformario: Ped Electro Bastard Ray.

naughtytorty: Ped respawn.

mooseontheloose: Pinball mode.

boysfromthebush: Grip tires.





Gubble

At the title screen, type **GUBBLEDCHEAT**. *You'll hear Gubble D. Gleep laugh, verifying that you entered the code correctly.*

Now you can try the following:

- *From anywhere on a map, press:*
  F3: Removes all blocks from the map.
  F9: Warps you to the next city map.
- *From a launch pad on a map, press:*
  Page Up: Warps you to the next level.
  Page Down: Returns you to the previous level.
  Home: Advances you 10 levels.
  End: Takes you back 10 levels.
- *During play, press:*
  F8: Toggles invincibility.
  F9: Complete any level.
  +: Speeds you up.
  -: Slows you down.

XCar: Experimental Racing

Type these key combos during gameplay:

Ctrl + Shift + F8: Change map color.

Ctrl + Shift + F9: Repair damage.

Ctrl + Shift + F10: Clear black flag.

At the Track Selection menu:

While selecting a track, hold down **S** or **R** to choose the type of weather (sunny/rainy).

Hold down **M** while selecting Single Race or Quick Race to enable the missile. Then fire it using the HUD toggle key.



Hexen II

Having trouble blazing your way through the demo on this month's PC Games.exe? Type these cheats at the game's console (accessed by hitting the ~ key):

give h x: Gives x amount of health (up to 999).

god: God mode.

impulse 9: All weapons/mana.

impulse 14: Sheep.

impulse 23: Torch.

impulse 25: Tome of power.

impulse 39: Fly.

impulse 40: Gain a level.

impulse 43: All weapons/mana/items.

impulse 44: Throw item.

impulse 99: Restart game.

noclip: Turns off clipping.



Shadow Warrior

To use the cheats, simply hit **T** *during a single-player game and, while in talk mode, type one of these codes:*

swchan: God mode.

swgimme: All items.

swghost: No clip mode.

swgreed: All cheats on.

swtrekx (where x = 01–28): Level warp, including deathmatch and secret levels.

swloc: Show location in upper left-hand corner.

swmap: Toggle automapping.

swres: Change screen resolution.

swstart: Go to the start.

swtrix: Enable bunny rockets.

winpachinko: Always win the Pachinko games.



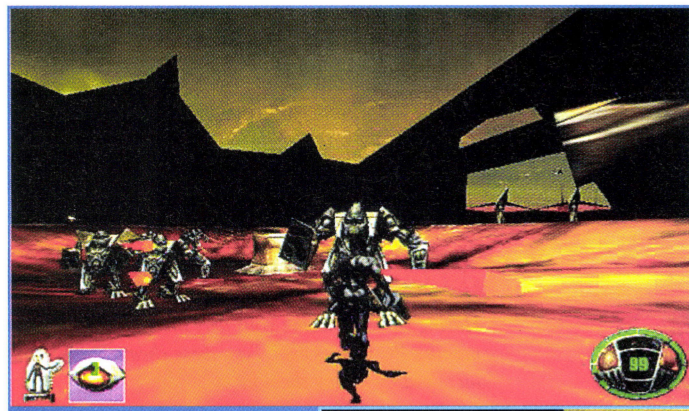
SEE MORE ONLINE
http://www.pcgames.com

Is a certain game driving you nuts? Can't figure out how to kill an enemy, solve a puzzle, or find a key? We can help! Let us know what games you'd like to see cheats for by contacting PC Games, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Ste. 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7482; email: ccohen@pcgames.com. Due to the high volume of mail, we can't reply to most letters personally, but we'll do our best to print cheats/tips for games that get the most requests.

NEW! Got some cool cheats or tips of your own? Send 'em in! If they work and we like 'em, we'll print 'em here and spot you a free game for your effort.

Does D3D Get It Done?

Two years ago, Microsoft promised that its Direct3D API would bring 3D graphics acceleration to the masses. Microsoft being Microsoft, how could video-card makers and game developers refuse? Well, the hardware guys have come through with a slew of D3D-only cards for Christmas, and the developer guys, despite their reservations about D3D as a programming tool, know when they see a rifle-barrel staring them in the eyes. So, we're finally seeing a steady procession of games that support those D3D cards arriving from STB, TechWorks, Jaton, and Diamond.



In this Voodoo shot, the textures exhibit sharpness and great detail...



...which are diminished if you're using a first-generation D3D card.

D3D was supposed to give programmers a common software standard they could write their games to, letting one title run on a variety of boards. Despite D3D's ubiquity, though, don't expect hardware-specific 3D to disappear any time soon. Many game programmers will continue to write their titles to take direct advantage of specific 3D cards using chipsets from 3Dfx, Rendition, and PowerVR, sometimes ignoring D3D support altogether. Like you, they often struggle to figure out which board is best for them. As a result, we're seeing a number of games that support both hardware 3D acceleration and software D3D acceleration. As you consider what kind of 3D accelerator to buy, we can look at specific games in D3D software and direct hardware–accelerated modes to see which looks better.

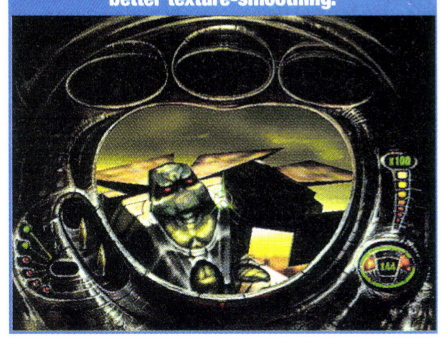


But use a second-generation D3D card and MDK doesn't seem much different...

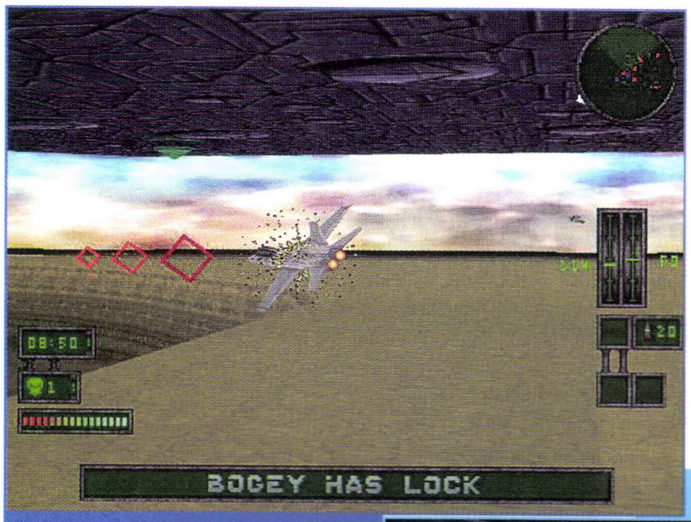
To satisfy our curiosity, we tried out MDK, iF-22, and Independence Day in both D3D and 3Dfx modes for a quick comparison. All three run on a wide variety of cards, from boards based on 3Dfx to Rendition to ATI chipsets and others. Starting with MDK, we ran the Direct3D version of the game using 3Dfx as the selected accelerator; it looked very good. The interesting thing is that we then ran the 3Dfx-specific version of MDK on the same system, and it looked much better. It also seemed to have a higher frame rate, at least subjectively.

On the other hand, with iF-22 and Independence Day, you don't notice a glaring difference between 3Dfx and D3D modes on a variety of cards. Ground textures are smoothed out and are more attractive in hardware, and aircraft surfaces are more finely detailed, but the D3D versions hold up surprisingly well. This is an aspect of 3D acceleration that takes getting used to. Some developers take special efforts to tailor a game to specific cards—as Beyond Games is doing with Redline for Voodoo, Vérité, and PowerVR chipsets. In other cases, it seems like the developers added 3D options as an afterthought. In these cases, the games look better than in SVGA, but owning a Voodoo or Rendition card doesn't help them that much.

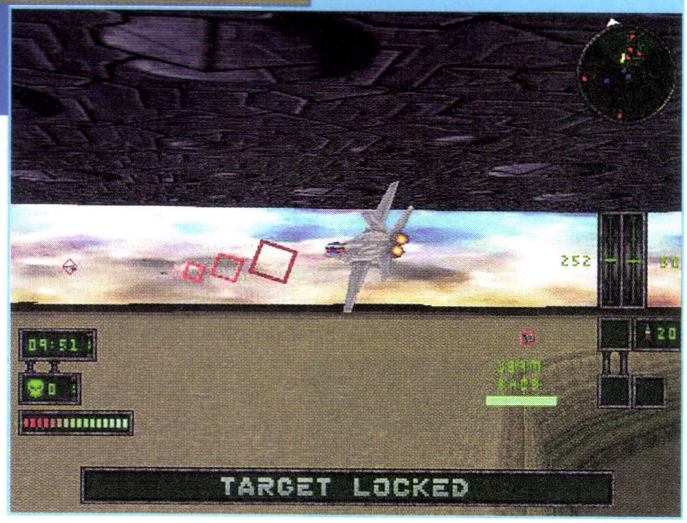
...from what you see delivered by a 3Dfx accelerator, despite the Voodoo's better texture-smoothing.



On the other hand, if you're considering a first-generation 3D accelerator, then you have to expect that it won't be as capable of rendering 3D if the game you're playing wasn't coded to work specifically with the chips on that card. That's



You won't see much of a difference between the 3Dfx version of Independence Day...



...and the D3D version.

where D3D comes in: the API recognizes when an accelerator is underpowered and can't handle hardware acceleration. Direct3D steps in and handles things in software—supporting only as many acceleration routines as the software can emulate. But software emulation is always slower and less capable than the real thing in hardware. D3D can give us 3D acceleration that looks a lot better than SVGA, but it's not the best 3D acceleration. That's what we saw with MDK.

The crucial factor is raw power. The more power a D3D card has, the more processes it can accelerate. The D3D API recognizes power when it sees it and enables additional acceleration routines that Direct3D provides programmers.

Second-generation D3D cards such as STB's Velocity 128 and Diamond's Viper D3D accelerators bring muscle-car power to 3D acceleration in D3D. Run MDK in D3D mode on one of these cards, and it's hard to tell how it differs with the way the game looks running in 3Dfx mode on Diamond's Monster 3D.

As with everything else, you get what you pay for. Stick with higher performance, popular cards, and you won't get burned. If you end up buying a Velocity or Viper accelerator this fall, you won't be disappointed. But the truth remains that game developers are still embracing non–D3D-specific Voodoo, Vérité, and PowerVR cards to show off what their games can do. If you buy into one of these accelerator families, you'll get the fastest "custom-coded" games *and* solid Direct3D performance.

—David Gerding

HARDWARE HALL OF FAME

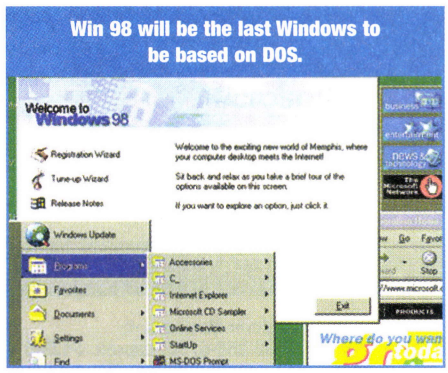
Wondering what hardware to buy to get the best game machine for your money? It's easy: just check *PC Games*' running list of our top hardware recommendations. Each month, we'll update the Hall of Fame as we review new products.

CATEGORY	PRODUCT	DETAILS	OUR RATING
PC	Falcon Mach V	Falcon Northwest; 800-258-6778; approx. $4,000	A
Monitor	Optiquest V775 17-inch	ViewSonic; 800-888-8583; approx. $600	A
CD-ROM drive	FX2400	Mitsumi; 800-648-7861; approx. $199	A-
Sound card	AWE64	Creative Labs; 800-998-5227; $129	A
Speakers	ACS55 Power Gaming System	Altec Lansing; 800-258-3288; approx. $150	A
Joystick	F-16 Combatstick	CH Products; 619-598-2518; $69.95	A+
Gamepad	SideWinder Gamepad	Microsoft; 206-882-8080; $39	A+
Modem	SupraExpress 336i SP	Diamond; 800-727-8772; approx. $125	A
Graphics card	Stealth 3D 2000 Pro	Diamond; 800-727-8772; approx. $160	A
Key add-on	Monster 3D Monster Sound 3D	Diamond; 800-727-8772; approx. $180 800-727-8772; approx. $199	A

Win 2000: The Death of DOS Games?

As clunky and archaic as DOS is, there's still beauty in it for many game developers. Coding in DOS was a way of getting directly at the hardware in your PC to maximize performance and force the computer to do exactly what the programmer wanted it to do—operating system be damned. Windows 95, despite being a far more forward-thinking and standardized platform to design games for, was still built on a DOS kernel—making it forever DOS-friendly. None of this will change in Windows 98, but Microsoft intends to build Windows 2000 on the NT kernel two years down the road, which likely means a quick end to DOS games.

"I would love to work in DOS forever, but the writing has been on the wall since Win 95," says Eric Biessman, senior designer at Raven. "May it rest in peace."



Win 98 will be the last Windows to be based on DOS.

For those of you who haven't followed NT, it's Microsoft's next big thing. NT was designed to be all the things DOS isn't: most importantly, NT is a protected platform in which programs can't control memory allocation or access video options directly—two of the main reasons why game designers like DOS. As Microsoft will tell you, though, playing rough with RAM and video modes causes conflicts that crash computers—even in Win 95. Businesses like NT for this reason, and Microsoft is betting that sometime after the turn of the century, consumers will be so happy with their Windows 95/98 experience that they'll buy into a more stable operating system and won't even notice the final demise of DOS.

But what about game programmers—will they be as willing to kiss DOS goodbye? Microsoft product manager Shannon Perdue thinks the advantages will win hardcore DOS programmers over.

"When developers start coding for NT, they'll be very surprised at the power," she says. "There also are a lot of advantages to writing for only one kernel—everyone is using the same drivers, hardware compatibility is much better, and the number of hardware conflicts is greatly diminished. It will make things much easier for everyone."

While Microsoft gets the NT evangelists moving, they may find they have a lot of work to do in the game community, according to Biessman. "Maybe NT will work out fine as a game platform, but from my experience so far, I can tell you I haven't been thrilled with it," he says.

At a Windows Platform Meeting last August, Microsoft revealed its post–Windows 98 plans for the first time—outlining consumer (Windows 2000), desktop-server, and multiuser versions of NT. The next version of NT is NT 5.0, which is just completing its second beta test and is scheduled for prime time in 1998. Perdue wouldn't say whether Windows 2000 is based on NT 5.0 or NT 6.0. But she did reveal that Microsoft is already trying to prod game and application developers into supporting the unified Win32 application programming interface (API) that's compatible with both Win 95/98 and NT.



There may not be room for DOS games like Redneck Rampage after Win 2000.

"The DirectX team has already started talking with game developers, and you can expect to see more forums and outreach programs to get these guys thinking about NT," Perdue says.

Today, DOS games are still very much alive. Three years after the release of Win 95 and Microsoft's full-metal-jacket campaign to sell its DirectX APIs to game developers, 5 out of the 14 games reviewed in the October issue of *PC Games* had separate DOS installations, and one was DOS-only. But with Microsoft dialing DOS out of the picture, game producers see a "Wanted Dead" poster with DOS written boldly on it.

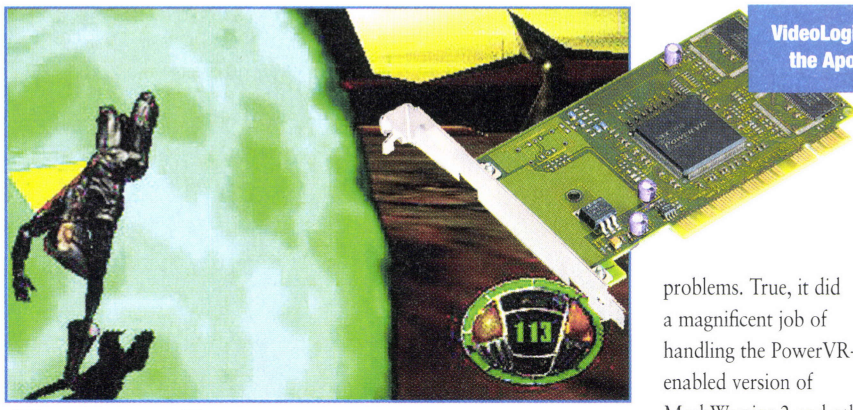
"An NT kernel means the end of DOS games," says Ritual CEO Harry Miller. "Around here, we think DOS is already dead. But I think anyone still supporting DOS now has every reason to start moving away from the platform, and that trend will accelerate."



Game execs say DOS is dead.

So, if you're a DOS diehard, enjoy the platform while it lasts and recognize the passing of an era. Chances are, once every new consumer PC in 2001 comes installed with Win 2000, DOS games will already be a part of gaming lore. —*George T. Chronis*


Want unreal performance from UNREAL?
Play it on a Falcon
MACH V
CALL TOLL FREE:
1-888-FALCON-1
www.falcon-nw.com
FALCON NORTHWEST COMPUTER SYSTEMS
Custom built PCs starting at $2,495 for game playing, graphics, game design - or even getting some work done
eal™ ©1997 Epic Megagames, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created by Epic Megagames, Inc.
lished & distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp.



VideoLogic rethinks the Apocalypse.

Apocalypse 3Dx

RATING: B+

VideoLogic and its PowerVR partner, NEC Electronics, make a plucky pair. For more than a year, they've been trying to get people interested in their 3D-video-accelerator technology. And in many ways, they've been successful, with a number of big developers and publishers—including Psygnosis and Gremlin—signing on to make games specifically for PowerVR cards.

Like Diamond's Monster 3D card and Orchid's Righteous 3D accelerator, the original Apocalypse 3D card was a swiftly installed add-on that worked in conjunction with an existing 2D video controller. Better yet, installation didn't require the use of a bulky pass-through video cable strung between both video cards.

Unfortunately, the Apocalypse 3D had some problems. True, it did a magnificent job of handling the PowerVR-enabled version of MechWarrior 2 and other games adapted specifically for it. And, unlike the Voodoo cards, the Apocalypse 3D could deal with games at resolutions beyond 640-by-480. But there were some things this PowerVR card didn't do so well. Most notably, there was no bilinear or adaptive filtering, which are used to smooth out blocky pixels. Spotty support for Microsoft's Direct3D standard was another nagging reality: As we discovered, running MDK in D3D mode was not an option on the Apocalypse 3D.

But the PowerVR partners listened to their users and went back to the drawing board—coming up with a thoroughly reworked chipset, rechristened the PCX2. This summer, VideoLogic released an updated accelerator using PCX2—the Apocalypse 3Dx. Although the name isn't much different, this card is vastly improved over its predecessor.

The 3Dx can now handle D3D easily. MDK, iF-22, Independence Day, and Interstate '76 all ran as they should in D3D mode. And PowerVR-enabled games such as Tomb Raider, MechWarrior 2, and Kalisto's Ultimate Race all seemed to redraw their screens in a zippier fashion, with fewer glitches than before. According to NEC, we can attribute these enhancements to an extra 50 percent processing boost added to the PCX2. That same performance punch is also supposed to deliver high frame rates at screen resolutions of 800-by-600 and higher, thanks to fill rates of up to 40 million pixels per second on high-performance Pentiums.

We'd like to have tested that premise with the special version of GLQuake that VideoLogic and NEC were showing off at this year's E3, but it wasn't ready by press time. Because existing 3D benchmarks aren't adept at making sense of the PCX2's unique architecture, their results don't accurately represent what this accelerator can do. But our in-the-game experience suggests the 3Dx has some performance headroom to go before it maxes out.

Given that the PowerVR partners have spent many millions of dollars signing up more than 40 developers to adapt their games to PCX2, and considering the growing number of D3D games on the horizon, the Apocalypse 3Dx is a solid choice. For their money, gamers get a quality game bundle that includes WipeOut XL and the PC version of Resident Evil. If you already own one of the original Apocalypse 3D cards, VideoLogic will upgrade you to the new package for $99. (VideoLogic; 800-578-5644; www.videologic.com; street $175)

—George T. Chronis

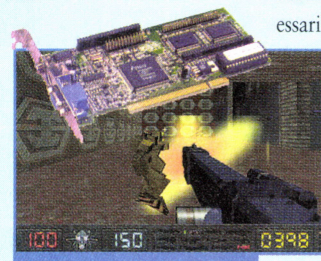
Jaton Blaze 3D

RATING: B

When I first got the new Blaze 3D Ultimate, I thought, "Aah...*another* one?" But this video card is different—it's the first to feature Trident's new 3DImage 975 64-Bit Graphics Engine with a 230MHz RAMDAC. So I set out to see what it could do.

The Blaze 3D Ultimate went in without a hitch—truly plug-and-play. After installing the drivers, I found that they weren't DirectDraw-certified (though still compatible), but a quick download of new drivers from the Jaton Web site fixed that. This is certainly a plus, as even higher-priced boards usually don't provide certified DirectX drivers. Having certified DirectDraw drivers will assure compatibility and the best performance in Windows 95 games.

The 3DImage 975 delivers fast 2D performance, with screen redraws snapping up just like that. So, naturally, I threw some 3D at it. The 3DImage 975 boasts Direct3D and OpenGL support, though GLQuake ran at less than one frame a second (yuck!), rendering that support suspect. Direct3D games like Monster Truck Madness, iF-22, and Hellbender all displayed acceptable frame rates and texture smoothing. But while the 3DImage 975 provided decent performance overall, there was nothing necessarily better about this accelerator's performance compared to other D3D cards we've seen.



The Blaze is D3D-only.

So, all in all, the Blaze 3D is a fine board for average gamers, with solid 2D and 3D acceleration (if you like D3D). Unfortunately, the games bundled with the card, Daytona USA and Virtua Fighter PC, aren't a selling point. More intriguing is its TV output—with an optional TV tuner—so you can watch the tube and capture video all on one computer. And at about $140 for the 2MB and $170 for the 4MB, this card should fit well within everyone's pocketbook. (Jaton; 408-934-9369; www.jaton.com; street $140/$170)

—Chris Tou



Another fabulous 19-inch screen.

Princeton EO90

RATING: B

The onslaught of 19-inch monitors has begun, and all I can say is, "Bring 'em on." For price, picture quality, and acceptable desktop footprints, 19-inchers are fast becoming perfect choices for serious gamers. After a pleasant experience with Hitachi's CM751U (Technobabble, October), the arrival of Princeton's EO90 provided another opportunity to evaluate the basic goodness of this size category.

Like the Hitachi, the EO90 has an 18-inch viewable screen area, but it has a .26 dot pitch, slightly larger than the CM751U's .22 dot pitch. Maximum resolution can be dialed up to 1,600-by-1,200. Still, this screen's overall sharpness and clarity are uniformly excellent. Interestingly, the Princeton's tube presents a more horizontal than square viewing area, which gives a cinematic feel to playing the Scourge of Armagon Quake pack with GLQuake.

The EO90's case takes up much less room on the desktop than you'd expect with a screen this size, and hooking up the EO90 was simple and trouble-free. Princeton doesn't include a driver disk, but Win 95 substitutes a standard VESA driver that works fine; if you want to have specific driver support, you can download a driver file from Princeton's Web site.

This monitor displays only one deficiency—the lack of a color control. In general, the color saturation was a bit less vibrant than in other monitors that have recently arrived for testing, and it would've been helpful to have a hue-adjustment option.

As 19-inch monitor prices continue to drop further below $900, gamers who would've never dreamed of saving up the cash for a 21-inch behemoth can reasonably consider a 19-inch model in the coming months, when prices will fall below $800. But if you're in the shopping mood today, the EO90 would be a good candidate to consider. (Princeton; 800-747-6249; www.prgr.com; street $899)

—George T. Chronis

ViewSonic EA771

RATING: B+

Well, it's been a few months since the tragic fiery loss of my beloved KDS 17-inch monitor (Technobabble, July/August). As you can imagine, I've been waiting for the day I'd get another monitor in my office that I could behold as fondly. The 17-inch ViewSonic EA771 just might be the one.

Because of the long hours I spend staring at a screen, one of the first things I look for in a monitor, aside from overall clarity, is whether or not I experience any eye fatigue after an entire day at the office. With an anti-static and anti-glare treatment on its screen, the EA771 causes minimal eye strain. Another key feature I check for is clarity all throughout the screen—especially on the edges and corners of the monitor. For the most part, the EA771 is nearly flawless.

However—and I must admit this is very, very picky—my unit did exhibit a subtle bluish tint in the lower left-hand corner of the screen.

ViewSonic upgrades its line of 17-inchers.



Mitsumi FX240

RATING: A-

Not long ago, I received an email from a reader who was sure the new 12x CD-ROM drive he'd installed to replace his old 4x was defective, because the 12x sounded like it was coming apart every time he spun up a disc. Welcome to the world of fast CD-ROM drives. Drives 12x and higher employ much quicker rotational speeds, and a disc tray that may have been fine holding a disc turning at 4x can often encourage disc-wobbling at faster speeds. And even if the trays are leveled correctly, the motors needed to achieve those 24x speeds are loud monsters. If you're dead-set on speed, though, Mitsumi's FX240 ATAPI/IDE unit minimizes all these ills.

The FX240 is tightly constructed. The tray transport mechanism operates smoothly, without the ricketiness some other drives exhibit.

Mitsumi joins the 24x wars with a strong contender.



Mitsumi also considered sound issues, placing a foam cushion along the entire inside of the disc door seal to buffer motor noise and deaden the effects of high-speed disc rotation.

The FX240 uses a 12x/24x motor, shifting into high gear on accessing and transferring especially large files. That's a plus, because smaller files get the 12x mode, which is less noisy and noticeable. In optimum conditions, the FX240 can reach transfer rates of 3,600KB per second and access times of 90ms. The 256KB buffer cache also helps to speed along transfers.

Installation is an extremely simple affair—remove the old 12x and plug the Mitsumi in. Our existing ATAPI drivers worked just fine. One thing to look for, however: Our test unit was set to "master." Check the rear schematic to make sure the FX240 is actually set to "slave." Otherwise, your system won't reboot. Except for this small glitch, Mitsumi has a winner. (Mitsumi Electronics; 800-648-7861; www.mitsumi.com; street $199)

—George T. Chronis

Another great feature of this monitor is its built-in speakers. Now, I don't want this to turn into a speaker review, but they aren't half bad. Given, if you already have a Bose Acoustimass Multimedia setup, these won't replace them. But they'd be satisfactory if you don't have any speakers right now. Other features include a built-in microphone, and a headphone jack for those late-night game fixes when you feel obligated not to wake your sleeping roommate.

With a maximum resolution of 1,280-by-1,024 and a high refresh rate of 87Hz at 1,024-by-768 resolution, the flicker-free viewing performance of the EA771 is comparable to other monitors in its price range. You should definitely consider it if you're in the market. (ViewSonic; 800-688-6688; www.viewsonic.com; street $550)

—Joe McCloud

ProView PV-776R

RATING: B

The ProView features dynamic colors and sharpness that compare well with Sony and NEC.



It's all about big these days. I remember being in high school and crossing the street to a friend's house to gawk at his new 17-inch monitor, which seemed to me like the most gigantic, awe-inspiring display imaginable.

Now that 19-inch and 21-inch monitors are proliferating, and with the looming promise of immersive home-theater–type screens, PC gaming on a 17-inch monitor almost seems trite. But for those less eager (or with less money to spend) to leap into the mammoth-screen movement, ProView's PV-776R is a nice "little" monitor. Its 17-inch screen offers a 15.7-inch viewable area and is rigged with a handy onscreen display to handle your eight adjustable functions. There are 10 preset factory modes and an additional 10 user modes to configure your display to your liking.

The picture is wonderfully sharp and bright, and you know a monitor is up to snuff when you can run Links LS '98 (probably the single best graphics-resource test on the market) through all its paces and the monitor performs splendidly. It maintains resolution and sharpness effortlessly, even with three simultaneous dynamic camera angles in the frame.

Little or not, the ProView PV-776R is a very worthwhile monitor. I'd recommend it to gamers who aren't hung up on having 19 inches or more on their desktop. (ProView; 800-770-8439; street $525)

—Daniel Morris

Panasonic 24x ATAPI

RATING: B

And so they get faster—now 24 times faster than those original drives that wowed the world a few short years ago. This latest upgrade from Matsushita, badged under the Panasonic label, delivers a solid, no-nonsense option for anyone looking for a new EIDE-controlled CD-ROM drive. The advertised 85ms access time is a little generous, but this thing certainly flies. Standard volume control and headphone socket on the front end are the basics.

Installation's a breeze, although—despite the fact that it comes with a few screws—there's no mounting kit included (so use the one from a drive you may be replacing). Windows 95 plug-and-play really worked, removing the old drive drivers and installing the new ones—the whole process couldn't have been simpler. A new driver disk is included for backup.

Panasonic's 24x shakes, rattles, and rolls.



The downside to this solid drive is the noise and vibration; it managed to vibrate my whole desk when just spinning idly—some feat. The noise level was acceptable, but the vibrations were noticeable at every access point and track change. This shouldn't be too off-putting to potential purchasers—at the decent estimated street price of $199, what you get is your basic, no-frills, but pretty damn speedy CD-ROM drive. (Panasonic; 800-742-8086; www.panasonic.com/alive; street $199)

—Rob Smith

Jazz Adrenaline Rush 3D

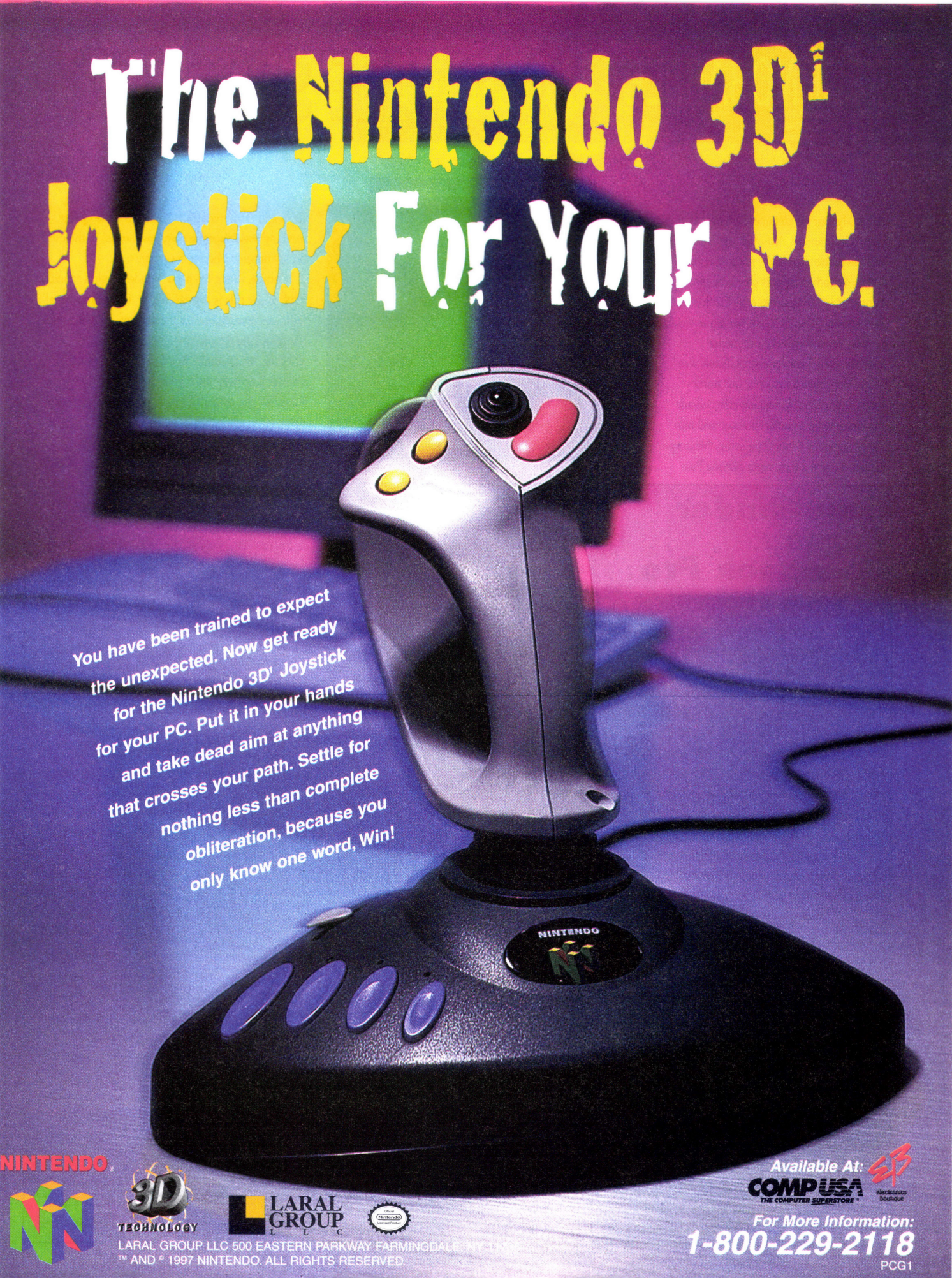
RATING: B+

I've been praying to the game gods lately for a 3Dfx board, one that would be simple to install and give me that amazing 3D experience I keep seeing on The Player's ultra-expensive Falcon. Well, after several months of paying homage to the tech priests around here, Jazz Multimedia's Adrenaline Rush 3D arrived in answer to my prayers.

The Adrenaline Rush 3D comes with 3Dfx's Voodoo Rush chipset, as well as 6MB of memory (2MB for textures and 4MB for display memory). The Rush 3D board comes bundled with Activision's 3Dfx version of Interstate '76, MechWarrior: Mercenaries, and the 3Dfx-only release of Acclaim's Turok: Dinosaur Hunter. Given that the total retail value of these games alone is $150, the package's $215 price seems more than acceptable (especially since you get Turok).

Installation was a snap: I just slid the board in and the Jazz drivers did the rest. At first glance, everything seemed fine—the 2D modes worked

The Nintendo 3D[i] Joystick For Your PC.



NINTENDO

3D TECHNOLOGY

LARAL GROUP L L C

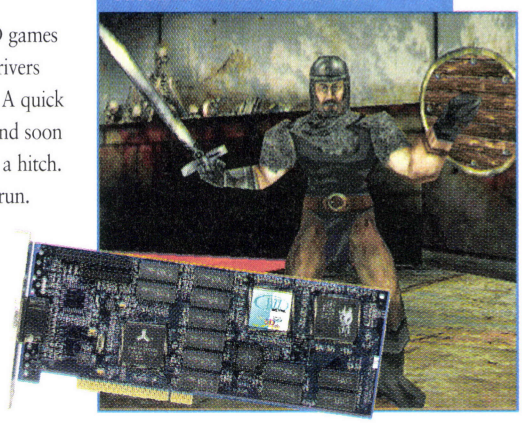
Official Nintendo Licensed Product

Available At: COMPUSA THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE EB electronics boutique

For More Information:
1-800-229-2118
PCG1

LARAL GROUP LLC 500 EASTERN PARKWAY FARMINGDALE, NY 11735
™ AND © 1997 NINTENDO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Succumb to the Voodoo Rush.



flawlessly. But my initial experiences with 3D games were a little spotty. Although my Rush 3D drivers were fine, this card really wanted DirectX 5. A quick call to customer support clued me into this and soon I could play Mercenaries and Turok without a hitch. But without DirectX 5, neither game would run.

My Voodoo gaming experience with the early beta version of Turok was killer. The smooth textures, fast frame rates, and incredible fogging effects made me almost leap into my monitor and into the transparent water for a swim. Next up, GLQuake and a long night playing Pain Keep and DM7 (you can download these Quake mods at **www.pcgames.com/downloads**) in the office on my humble Micron. Sweet bliss.

Coming down from my Voodoo high, I would have to say this is a great board. There are several all-in-one boards out on the market—the Hercules Stingray 128/3D and Intergraph's Intense 3D Voodoo, for example. But don't let the lesser-known Jazz name turn you away. The Adrenaline Rush 3D is a contender with a full package for its price. (Jazz Multimedia; 408-727-8900; www.jazzmm.com; street $215)

—Marcale Wallace

SideWinder Force Feedback Pro

RATING: A

When you see the Force Feedback Pro on someone's desktop, your first reaction will likely be, "What the hell is that?" What it is is one ugly—and yet strangely beautiful—stick that ups the ante for the fledgling force-feedback market.

In case you've missed all the hoopla, force-feedback peripherals deliver tactile feedback in the form of jolts, vibrations, and such that are tied to events happening on your game screen. Fire a rocket launcher and the stick recoils in your hand; crash a plane and it jumps all over the place.

We thought CH Products' ForceFX was cool when it came out, but the SideWinder Force Feedback Pro is in a class above.

The FFP's design is really far out—it looks like something stolen from Area 51. It's got a large, oddly shaped base and basically resembles a SideWinder Pro that's pregnant with twins. The stick offers eight user-programmable buttons, an eight-way hat switch, a shift button, and a throttle control. Plus, like the SideWinder Pro, the stick rotates left and right, emulating a rudder. But I didn't like the horizontal, thumb-controlled throttle all that much; I prefer the vertical throttle wheel like those found on CH's F-16 Combat Stick. (The ForceFX, however, doesn't include a throttle.)

The mutated casing houses a 16-bit, 25MHz onboard force coprocessor, which offloads much of the force-effect processing burden from the host CPU. This means the force effects won't slow down your gameplay. There's also a cooling fan inside so the unit powers up when you boot up your machine, which technofreaks are sure to get a kick out of. Built-in ROM allows up to 30 force effects to be stored in the stick for immediate access. And 2K of built-in RAM lets the stick download and modify force effects from the host machine during gameplay.

The FFP uses a fancy infrared beam to engage force effects when you grip the handle—let go of the handle and the forces disengage: this lets you grip the handle as loosely or tightly as you want while keeping the stick a-rockin' (and you won't get your hand slapped by the stick when you let it go—which can happen with the ForceFX). The overall sturdy construction instills confidence that the stick can and will hold up to the heavy-duty pounding the strong force effects and you are sure to give it.

The included Game Device Software 2.0 completes the FFP package. This is easily the slickest and easiest-to-use joystick-configuration software available, and it's where Microsoft really deserves accolades. The software lets you load game profiles for your FFP (or any other Microsoft peripheral) with a simple click of the mouse—and programming keystroke functions into the stick and saving your own profiles is a breeze. The software also lets you adjust force-effect strength and stick tension.

The Force Feedback Pro: ugly as sin, but a great stick.



The FFP ships with Activision's I-76 and limited versions of MDK and Shadows of the Empire. I-76 was the best: the stick pulls to the right when you lose a tire, kicks when you fire the .45, and vibrates realistically overall as you careen around in your car.

What's not to like? Well, those of you with dedicated high-speed game ports may have some trouble getting it to work. The FFP uses the MIDI port on your sound card to enable the force effects; however, with an adapter you can enable them through the serial port on your PC instead. Also, there's not a lot of software yet that supports force-feedback effects, but there's a lot on the way. (Software is also coming that'll let you program your own force effects.)

And finally, this toy ain't cheap. But the FFP's advanced, sturdy design and ease of use make it the force-feedback stick to own. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; www.microsoft.com; street $150)

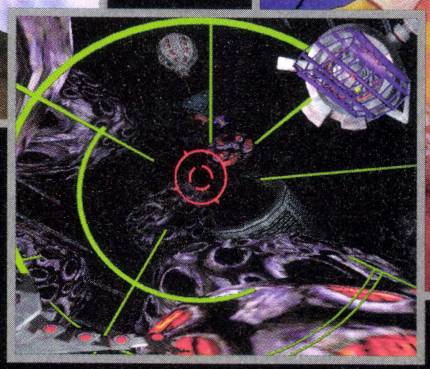
—Steve Klett

The FFP really rocks in Interstate '76.



Artificial intelligence.
Real terror.




DEAD RECKONING™

Coming September 29

PIRANHA® INTERACTIVE PUBLISHING

1.800.747.2642 ext. 300 www.deadreck.com

GOLDTREE

TECHNOBABBLE S.O.S.

Pentium IIs vs. Pentium Pros, and what to do when you scratch your game disc

By Patrick Marshall

Q I have a few questions about Pentium Pros. First of all, they are the "next generation" of computers, right? Are they really faster and better than ordinary Pentiums? What's the difference between Pros and ordinary Pentiums? Why should I buy a Pentium Pro and not a Pentium II?

CyberJamie
Via email

A *The next generation? No. It's true that Pentium Pro processors are a more recent generation than standard Pentium processors. To begin with, they offer 5.5 million transistors, compared to the standard Pentium's 3.3 million, which improves the sheer crunching power. More importantly, the Pentium Pro is optimized for 32-bit applications. The processor uses a technology Intel calls "dynamic execution": The first thing it does is to take a look at the data coming in and determine the most economical sequence for executing it.*

The flip side of the Pentium Pro's focus on 32-bit applications is that if you're running 16-bit applications, a 200MHz Pentium Pro will only deliver performance roughly equal to a standard 200MHz Pentium processor. The Pentium II series sports 7.7 million transistors and a larger Level 1 cache than the Pentium Pro, and it has MMX multimedia capabilities built in. So, unless you can get a great deal on a used Pentium Pro, the Pentium II is the better choice for your money.

Q I recently upgraded from a Sound Blaster 16 to a Sound Blaster AWE32 Plug-and-Play ISA, and I'm having trouble with the fact that it adds another IDE controller. It takes the last IRQ I have open, and I need that for my network card. Is there any way I can disable the IDE controller on the sound card? Or should I disable the IDE controller on my motherboard and use the one on the Sound Blaster?

Thomas
Via email

A *You've run into one of those lingering problems resulting from the transition to Plug-and-Play. Fact is, Windows 95 doesn't do well with disabling devices at the hardware level.*

The first thing to do is to get the most current version of your BIOS. Check with your motherboard's manufacturer for that. Next, go to Creative Labs' Web site and download their Plug-and-Play Configuration Manager (from **www.creaf.com/wwwnew/tech/ftp/ftp-pat.html#utilities***). The files you want to download are PnPcmgr1 and PnPcmgr2. These are self-extracting archives that you'll want to store in a new directory.*

Next, reboot your computer. When you see the "Loading Windows 95" message, hit the F8 key and select the Command Prompt boot option. At the command prompt, switch to the directory you created for the Plug-and-Play Configuration Manager and type install. *In addition to installing the Configuration Manager files, the routine will add a line to your config.sys file: device=c:\plugplay\drivers\dos\dwcfgmg.sys. You'll need to open the config.sys file in a text editor and add a space followed by /*file *to the end of that line.*

Now, reboot your computer, again to the Command Prompt. Switch to the c:\plugplay\icu directory and type icu. *That will load the Configuration Manager. Select Creative SB/32 PnP, then click on Modify. Next, highlight the IDE option and click on settings. Click on the drop-down list labeled Choice at the top of the screen, and scroll down 'til you get to a choice marked Disabled. Select Disabled, then OK. Exit the Configuration Manager and reboot into Windows 95. Go to the Control Panel and double-click on System, then select the Device Manager tab. Look for the Creative Labs IDE controller under either the hard drive or CD-ROM headings. Double-click on the device, then remove the check mark from the box that says Original Configuration. Do NOT go into Resources tab and click on Set Configuration Manually.*

Reboot the computer; the IDE controller on the sound card should be disabled. If this doesn't work with your BIOS, try calling up the Device Manager entry for the Creative Labs IDE controller, go to the Resources tab, and select the Basic Configuration 3 setting. By the way, this will only work if you have two IDE controllers on your motherboard, as most Pentium motherboards do.

You can also simply try to remove the Creative Labs IDE controller from the Device Manager. Then click on Refresh, and when Windows asks if you want to install a driver, click on No. The device will still be listed, but there won't be any resources assigned to it. If none of these workarounds get you where you want to be, bear in mind that Creative does offer some AWE32 cards that don't have IDE controllers on board.



Q My little brother scratched my Need for Speed disc. Now the music skips and locks up the computer. Do you know of a way to get rid of small scratches on a CD?

Carydna
Via email

A *If a scratch on a CD is deep enough to affect performance, there's no practical way to fix it. But most software companies will provide a new disc, although you may be charged a service and delivery fee. Electronic Arts, the maker of Need for Speed, says that it'll be happy to replace your disc. If you purchased the game directly from Electronic Arts, call 800-245-4525. If you bought the product from a retailer, call 650-572-2787, and press option 3.*

Fax, mail, or email your queries to the S.O.S. staff at:
PC Games
951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700
San Mateo, CA 94404
Fax: 415-349-7482
Email: sos@pcgames.com


CH
no compromises.
overpowering. deadly. abusive.
the ultimate domination tool.
it's even better when plugged in.
the stunning new
gamestick
from CH products.
there is nothing like it.
anywhere.
gamestick.
the future is here.
GAMESTICK
ADVANCED
ABSOLUTE
USA
MADE
THREE YEAR
3
WARRANTY
GAMESTICK • GAMESTICK 14
760.598.2518 www.chproducts.com
Best Buy Chips & Bits Circuit City Comp USA Computer Express Cyberian Outpost Egghead Electronic Boutique Flight Sim Central Fry's Electronics High Flight
J & R Computer Micro Center Musicland Office Max Sears Target The Good Guys! Thinkstuff United CD-Rom PC Connection



Media On™ Game Extreme

MGPX166 Featuring:

- Intel 166MHz Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology
- Intel AN430TX Motherboard with 512K cache & USB
- 16 MB EDO DIMM / 1.44MB Floppy
- 3 GB EIDE Hard Drive
- S3ViRGE 3D w/4MB EDO RAM (METABYTE GIA 3D)
- Yamaha Sound on board
- 16X CDROM
- 104 Win95 Keyboard & Mouse
- Diamond Supra 33.6 voice Modem
- Mini-ATX CASE with 235 Watt Power Supply
- Microsoft windows 95 & McAfee VirusScan
- Monitor Sold Separately

$ 999

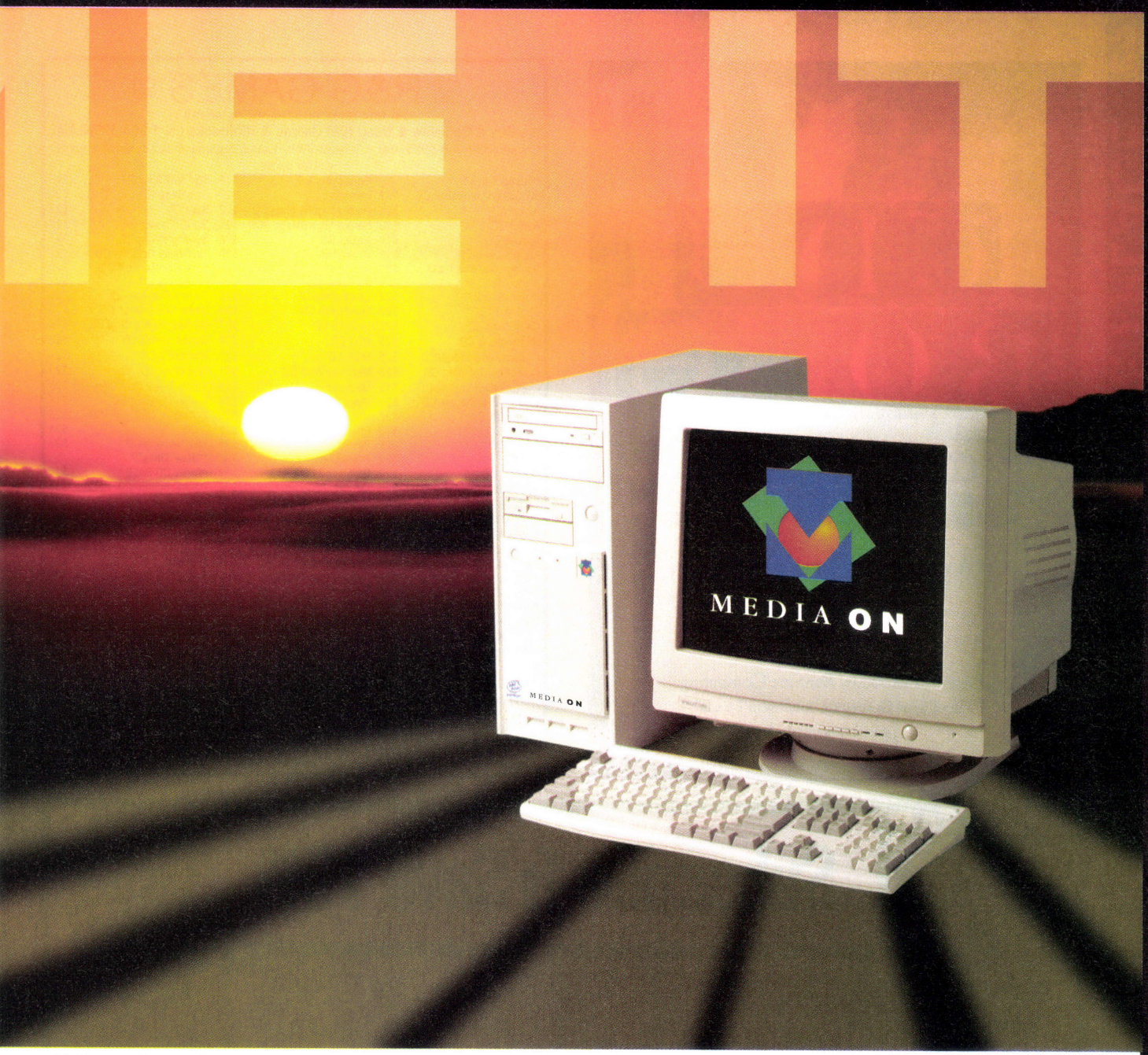
MGPX200 Featuring:

- Intel 200MHz Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology
- Intel AN430TX Motherboard with 512K cache
- 32 MB EDO DIMM / 1.44MB Floppy
- 3 GB EIDE Hard Drive
- S3 ViRGE 3D with 4MB EDO RAM
- Yamaha Sound on board
- 16X CDROM
- Diamond Supra 33.6 voice Modem
- 104 Win95 Keyboard & Mouse
- Mini-ATX CASE with 235 Watt Power Supply
- Microsoft windows 95 & McAfee VS Scan
- Monitor Sold Separately

Intel 233MHz Pentium® Processor w/MMX™ add $125

$ 1,199

Note, Intel Inside Logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. All other names are properties of their respective corporations. Price and specifications are subject to change without notice. Not responsible for typographic errors. Good only while supplies last.



Media On™ Graphic Extreme

MEPX200 Featuring:

- Intel 200MHz Pentium® Processor with MMX™ Technology
- Intel AN430TX Motherboard with 512K cache & USB
- 32 MB EDO DIMM / 1.44MB Floppy
- 4.5 GB Ultra Wide SCSI w/UW SCSI Controller
- 3D Video w/ 4MB RAM
- Yamaha Sound on board
- 16X SCSI CDROM
- 100MB SCSI internal ZIP Drive
- Diamond Supra 33.6 voice Modem
- 104 Win95 Keyboard & Mouse
- Mini-ATX CASE with 235 Watt Power Supply
- Microsoft windows 95 & McAfee VS Scan

$2,155

Expert II Featuring:

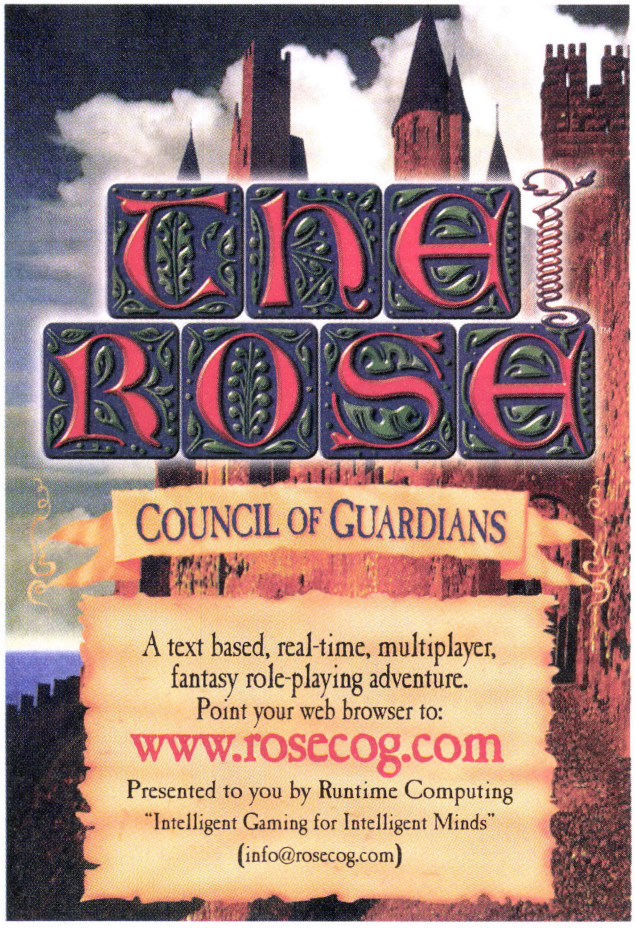
- Intel 233MHz **Pentium® II** Processor
- Intel PT440FX Motherboard
- 32 MB EDO RAM / 1.44MB Floppy
- 4.5 GB Ultra Wide SCSI w/UW SCSI Controller
- MATROX 3D with 4MB EDO RAM
- Yamaha Sound on board
- 16X SCSI CDROM
- Miamond Supra 33.6 voice Modem
- 104 Win95 Keyboard & Mouse
- Mini-ATX CASE with 235 Watt Power Supply
- Microsoft windows 95 & McAfee Virus Scan

$ 2,399

• 2 years limited warranty / 2 years Labor

To order call: 888-U-GAME-IT (888-842-6348)

MMX™ intel inside pentium® II



R&G GAMES

PO BOX 5008 Glendale Hts, IL 60139

We Buy & Sell New & Used IBM Games & Hintbooks Call 1-800-525-GAME

Canada 630-980-9995 Fax 630-980-9996 Email rggames@aol.com More games call for prices:

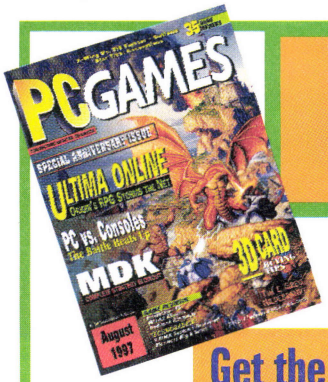
Used Titles		Gene Wars CD	$15	Star Trek Borg CD	$28
3D Creepnight Pinball CD	$22	Harvester CD	$20	Stonekeep CD	$20
Albion CD	$22	Heroes Might & MagicCD	$22	Strife CD	$22
Amber CD	$22	Heroes Might&Magic 2CD	$25	SU 27 Flanker CD	$18
Apache CD	$18	Hexen CD	$20	Syndicate Wars CD	$22
Anvil of Dawn CD	$18	Hyperblade CD	$20	Tie Fighter Collector CD	$24
Battleground Shiloh CD	$22	Imperium Galactica CD	$25	Time Commando CD	$20
Blood CD	$29	Iron Helix CD	$14	Toonstruck CD	$22
Blood & Magic CD	$22	Last Express CD	$25	Torrin's Passage CD	$20
Caesar 2 CD	$20	Lighthouse CD	$20	Under Killing Moon CD	$15
Cave Wars CD	$22	Links LS CD	$27	US Navy Fighter Gold CD	$18
Comanche 3 CD	$29	MAX CD	$24	Wages of War CD	$22
Command&ConquerCD	$22	MDK CD	$29	Warcraft 2 CD	$27
Com&Con Red Alert CD	$28	Mechwarrior 2 CD	$17	War Wind CD	$23
CrusaderNoRemorseCD	$18	Mechwarriro 2 Merc CD	$24	X-com Terror from Deep CD	$25
Crusader No Regret CD	$20	Myst CD	$18	X-wing Collector CD	$18
Daggerfall CD	$27	NHL Hockey 97 CD	$20	X-Wing Vs Tie Fighter CD	$26
Destiny CD	$18	Phantasmagoria CD	$19	Z CD	$21
Diablo CD	$29	Phantasmagoria 2 CD	$25	Zork Nemesis CD	$22
Dig CD	$22	Police Quest 5 CD	$22	***New Titles***	
Doom 2 CD	$20	Privateer 2 CD	$19	Afterlife CD *SALE*	$29
Discworld 2 CD	$28	Qin CD	$22	Carmagedden CD	$39
Ecstatica 2 CD	$28	Quake CD	$30	Fallen Haven CD	$39
EF2000 CD	$20	Realms of Haunting CD	$30	IndependenceDayCD*SALE*	$26
Enemy Nations CD	$32	Rebel Assault 2 CD	$20	Madden 97 CD *SALE*	$25
Eradicator CD	$18	Shadows Over Riva CD	$22	Magic the Gathering CD	$38
Exploration CD	$18	Space Quest 6 CD	$20	Megarace 2 CD *SALE*	$25
F-22 Lightening 2 CD	$24	Space Quest Coll CD	$25	NHL 97CD *SALE*	$25
Fable CD	$25	Spycraft CD	$22	Time Commando CD *SALE*	$31
Fantasy General CD	$22	Star Control 3 CD	$20	Triple Play 98 CD	$39
Fragile Allegiance CD	$25	Star General CD	$22	Twinsen's Odyssey CD	$39
FrontPage Baseball 96CD	$18	Star Trek Final Unity CD	$22	Warlords 3 CD	$39
FrontPage Football 97 CD	$20	Star Trek Klingon CD	$26	X-com Apocalypse CD	$39

Free UPS SHIPPING with purchase of $75 or more

http://members.aol.com/RGGAMES/index.html

Shipping UPS $5 Airborne $11 Credit Cards/Cashier Check/Money Order accepted Hours 9am-9pm Mon-Fri

Want to sell us your games: Games must be complete with original boxes, CD's & manuals (NO COPIES) in good condition, working & scratch free. Make a list including your name, address & phone number if under 10 you can call for prices over 10 fax, email or write. Prices are good for 2 weeks.



Subscribe & Save 75%



Get the Most!

- *Best game reviews*
- *Online and multiplayer coverage*
- *Game cheats and strategies*
- *Hands-on technical advice*
- *Playable demos on the companion CD-ROM*

Pay the Least!

*Subscribe for one year to PC Games—**and get a new CD-ROM with every issue**—for only $19.97. That's a 75% savings off the newsstand cover price.*

PCGAMES

CALL NOW! 1-800-688-4575

PC Games is published 10 times a year. Newsstand cover price: $7.99. Canadian and foreign orders must be prepaid in U.S. funds with $25/year added for air delivery.

ADVERTISER INDEX

PAGE	ADVERTISER	PHONE #	PRODUCT
4-5	3Dfx	www.3dfx.com	Voodoo Graphics
86-87	3DO	800-336-3506	Uprising
93	Access Software	800-800-4880	Overseer
150-151	Accolade	800-245-7744	Test Drive 4
2-3	Activision	800-477-3650	Quake 2
56-57	Activision	800-477-3650	Zork
22	Attitude Network	212-533-3513	Happy Puppy
49	Avalon Hill	800-999-3222	Defiance
43	Bethesda	800-677-0700	XCar
157	Bethesda	800-677-0700	Battlespire
82-83	Blizzard	800-953-SNOW	Starcraft
158	Blue Byte	800-933-2983	Incubation
126-127	Bungie	800-295-0060	Myth
193	CH Products	619-598-2518	Game Stick
95	CMP	516-562-5000	Gamepower
15	Columbia House	800-792-1000	Mail-order CDs
113	Discovery Company	800-762-2189	Byzantine
115	Discovery Company	800-762-2189	Evolution
16	Eidos	415-547-1200	Tomb Raider 2
18-19	Eidos	415-547-1200	Deathtrap Dungeon
136-137	Eidos	415-547-1200	Flight Unlimited II
103	Empire	800-216-9706	Timeshock!
41	Empire	800-216-9706	The Golf Pro
139	Empire	800-216-9706	Flying Corps Gold
185	Falcon Northwest	800-258-6778	Mach V
154-155	Graphic Sims	800-258-6778	F/A-18 Korea
88GT	GT Interactive	800-610-4847	Blood
C2-1	GT Interactive	800-610-4847	Oddworld
29	GT Interactive	800-610-4847	Mageslayer
26-27	Headland Digital	www.netwar.com	netWAR
168	Impact	602-940-6078	Dogday
C6	Intergraph	800-763-0242	3D Voodoo
199	Ionos	602-607-3785	Group of Games
189	Laral Group	800-229-2118	Nintendo 3DI Joystick
6-7	Lucas Arts	800-782-7927	Monkey Island 3
46	LucasArts	800-782-7927	Archives
50-53	LucasArts	800-782-7927	Jedi Knight
96-97	LucasArts	800-782-7927	Shadows of the Empire
194-195	Media On	888-U-GAME-IT	Media On
122	MicroProse	800-695-4263	7th Legion
134	MicroProse	800-695-4263	Dark Earth
170	MicroProse	800-695-4263	Magic: The Gathering
104	MicroProse	800-695-4263	X-COM: Apocalypse
196	Multi Service	913-451-2400	The Rose
146	Neuronware	888-371-4425	SKRAP
13	Nova Logic	800-245-4525	Raptor
85	On-Line PLC	0181-558-6114	Iron Wolves
191	Piranha	602-491-0500	Dead Reckoning
167	Quick Shot	408-263-4163	3D Striker
196	R&G Games	800-525-GAME	Game Titles
125	Red Orb	800-521-6263	Journeyman 3
200-C5	Red Orb	800-521-6263	Take No Prisoners
145	Storck USA	212-680-0800	Reisin
104-141	Sega	800-733-7288	Daytona
142-143	Sega	800-733-7288	NBA
24	SegaSoft	800-743-2725	HEAT
75-77	SegaSoft	800-743-2725	Flesh Feast
109	SegaSoft	800-743-2725	HEAT Endorsed
20-21	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	Half-Life
31-33	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	Lords of Magic
58-59	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	Soda
70-71	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	SWAT 2
100-101	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	Red Baron II
177	Sierra On-Line	800-757-7707	The Realm
55	Sir-tech	800-447-1230	Excalibur
64-65	Sony Interactive	800-922-7669	Tanarus
129	Sony Interactive	800-922-7669	Twisted Metal 2
131	Sony Interactive	800-922-7669	Jet Moto
152	SouthPeak Int.	916-677-4499	Drachen Zork
10-11	SouthPeak Int.	916-677-4499	Temüjin
36-37	SSI	800-601-7529	Dark Colony
110-111	SSI	800-601-7529	Imperialism
160-161	SSI	800-601-7529	Panzer General II
172	SSI	800-601-7529	Steel Panthers III
174	SSI	800-601-7529	War Wind II
45	THQ	818-591-1310	Pax Imperia
106-107	Wizards of the Coast	612-559-5140	Magic: The Gathering

PC GAMES™

This index is provided as an additional service. The publisher does not assume liability for errors or omissions due to last-minute changes.

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES

JULIE KNAPP
National Advertising Director
951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700
San Mateo, CA 94404
Tel: (415) 286-2502
Fax: (415) 349-5259

Arlette Goldbach
Advertising Coordinator
Tel: (415) 286-2513

Western United States
Debbie Burnett
Western Regional Manager
Tel: (415) 286-2568
Fax: (415) 349-5259

Eastern United States
Jon Banner
Eastern Regional Manager
Tel: (212) 880-2652
Fax: (212) 880-2601

PC Games Marketplace
Roger Arevalo
Online Advertising Manager
Tel: (415) 286-2552
Fax: (415) 349-5259

Douglas Chin
Account Manager
Tel: (415) 286-2551
Fax: (415) 349-5259

List Rentals: **Dan Chupka**
Tel: (888) 434-5478, ext. 826

Reprints: **Audrey Cree**
Tel: (415) 286-2521

FACE-OFF

Oldies but Goodies?

Who do you agree with? Or do both sides have it wrong? Send your opinions on this month's Face-off to pcgamesletters@pcgames.com.

Wirehead | *Scarface*

Games can take up a lot of space these days. But do new graphics technologies, cutting-edge sound, and giant code-bases guarantee a good game? Or are you better off with the lean classics of a decade or so ago? Scarface argues in slim *italics* that old games are like fine wines, while Wirehead holds forth in thick, chewy **bold** for newer, larger games.

Just recently, I uninstalled some very large and forgettable games from my hard drive. One would think that, with MB sizes well into the high double-figures (and in some cases, over 100), games are evolving into bigger, better, more interesting experiences. But after deleting a few 80MB bummers, I installed the complete PC Games *version of Ultima IV from our July/August CD-ROM and rediscovered the elegant joy of this 700K masterpiece. 700K doesn't get you an interesting .wav file in this day and age, which is why I maintain that today's enormous memory-hogging opuses are examples of bloat, not boons.*



Were there fewer clunkers in the old days...



...or does technology enhance great ideas?

Oh, like every single game of yesteryear was a magnificent masterpiece, shoehorning story, character, and awesome play into several K! You're making sweeping generalizations, as usual—what's impressive here is that you got two of them into one paragraph (your own form of bloatware, I guess). So let's spike them right now. There were plenty of bad games sitting on a single floppy disk, and there are plenty of great games that take advantage of today's superb technology. If you don't want to play them, no problem—go watch *Bewitched* on your black-and-white TV instead.

Face facts: The creative Golden Age of computer gaming is behind us. When developers had only primitive systems and limited memory to work with, they HAD to come up with content that was hugely entertaining and interesting. The creativity and life in the floppy games of yesteryear have waned in the face of technological progress. In our rush to embrace polygons, bitmaps, mipmaps, and ray-tracings, we've left such fundamentals as story, character, tone, and invention behind. Today's megameg games are all form, no substance.

Ridiculous. The Gabriel Knight games, the Wing Commanders—great storylines. Duke Nukem 3D—great character, even in an action shooter. The Neverhood—phenomenal inventiveness. I'm not out to bag on the great games of yore, but your suggestion that they are the pinnacle of the gaming experience reveals an ignorant mistrust of technology. The capability is there—are developers not supposed to use it? If every single game had essential qualities eroded by technology, you'd have a point, but our A-List is routinely full of games that look great, respond great, play great, and have all the writing, thoughtfulness, and innovation that you claim vanished in 1988.

These A-List games you mention are the exceptions to the rule; in general, technological leaps in gaming are not accompanied by the attendant evolution of our hobby as a place to be amazed by a creator's vision. Too many games have, by and large, become nothing more than technology clinics. In place of games proportionate with our capacity for wonder, we console ourselves with more and more dazzling whims of mathematics. Never mind the fact that we're playing the same game over and over in a dozen new guises—tomorrow's engine will run faster, tomorrow's polygon count will be higher. And so we beat on, boats against the current, borne ceaselessly back into the past.

Spare me, Fitzgerald. For one thing, I'm not hearing any specifics here. For another, I don't view those games as exceptions to the rule; when the industry is generating something on the order of 1,500 titles a year, the smart players know that games without essential qualities are mostly going to land in the bargain bins. If id had bothered to put any story to Quake, we wouldn't even be having this discussion. Suffice to say there are plenty of games that are far more than "technology clinics." And yes, there are lots of old games still worth my while, just as a scratchy old Robert Johnson blues record or a copy of the wonderful movie *M* are. But those don't invalidate the new records, movies—or games. If you feel so strongly about this, I dare you to trade that high-horsepower Micron you've got sitting on your desk for my 286; that should easily suit your gaming needs for the rest of your Luddite life.

In my darker moments, I'm almost ready to make that swap with you. (In a fitting ironic twist, my SuperMicron can't even run the original Zork. It's like asking Einstein to recite the alphabet, and him responding with technogibberish error messages.)

So your brilliant, "better" game can't even run on a modern, all-purpose appliance! Last I checked, *Casablanca* is B/W, but my color TV will still show it. So much for your reliance on the classics...

Scarface is standing in an open field west of a white house, while Wirehead is watching a sky the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.

GET THE HOTTEST GAMES AT RETAIL

HOT NEW games for addicts from ionos

$20 worth of rebate on ionos products purchased at retail



Get the ionos CD sampler at participating retailers

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE
ALPHA DRIVE

FREE TIME ON TEN
PLAY IT Ten ONLINE

FREE ONLINE TIME
AT&T WorldNet™ Service

FREE SCREEN SAVERS
DALLAS COWBOYS Cheerleaders

FREE MAGAZINES & CD's
PC GAMES

MUSIC • SOFTWARE MOVIES • BOOKS MEDIA PLAY

ionos
Software Development & Publishing Partners

hastings books • music • video Your Entertainment Superstore site

7944 E. Beck Lane Ste. #240 • Scottsdale, Arizona 85260 602.607.3785 www.ionos.com

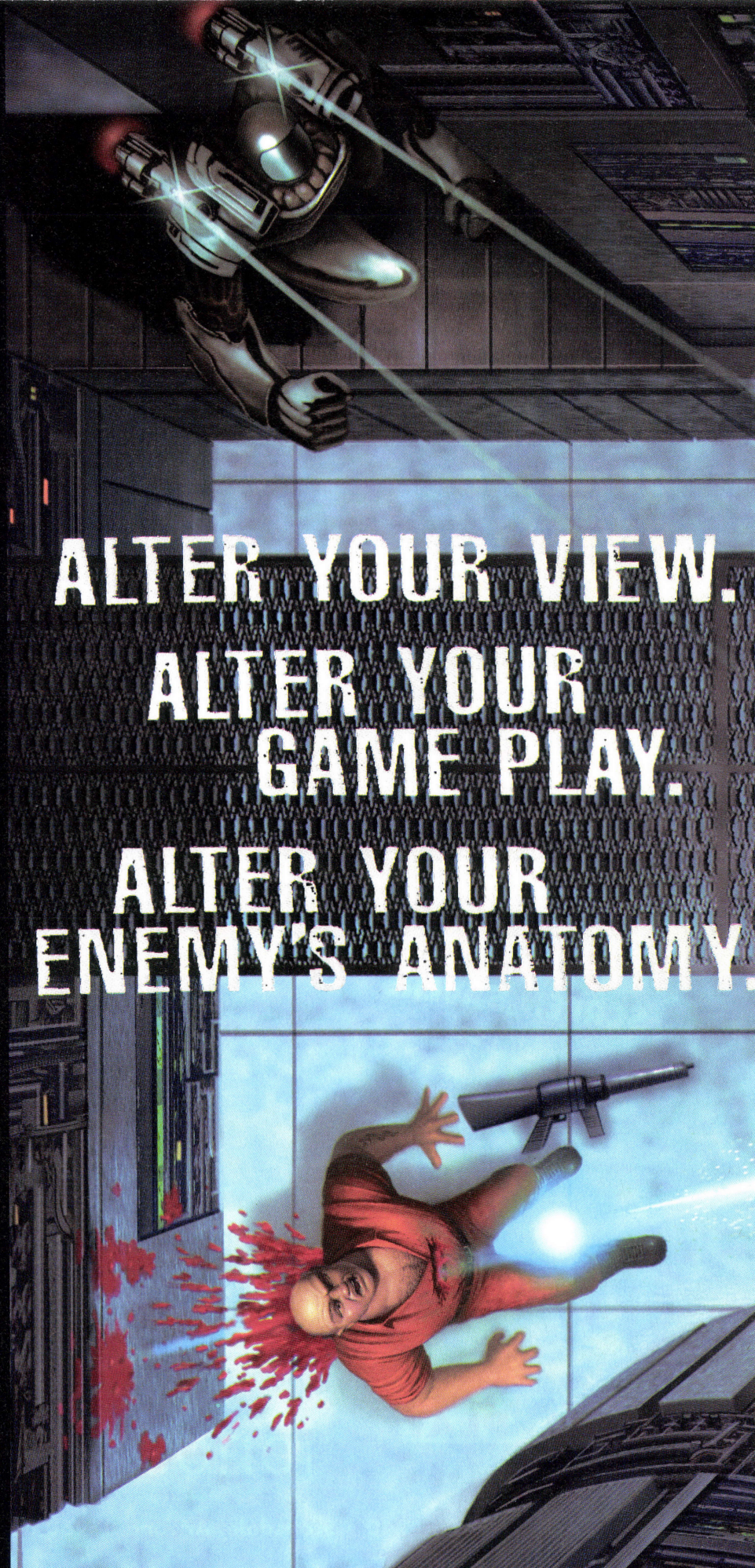
"A refreshing escape from all the me-too action games."
PC Games

"A deeper world than the typical first-person shooter."
Next Generation

"One manic gaming experience."
CNET Gamecenter

"You are starting a whole new style of 3D shooters."
E-mailed Gamer Feedback

"This game has to be the best that I've seen in years!"
E-mailed Gamer Feedback



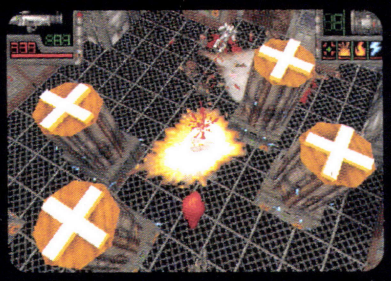
Mutants, Psychos, Cultists and Punks are converging on you from everywhere; above, below, behind, in front. You definitely haven't been here before. Top-down views don't just change the way the game looks, they change the way 3D action games play. You'll no longer be blindly running into doom, but mercilessly causing it from every conceivable angle.

Blow away enemies on the catwalk above or on the ground below. Grab some homicidal friends and cooperative multiplayer games can actually be just that—cooperative. With some skill, you might survive this post-apocalyptic hell on earth. But watch your back because death is all around you.

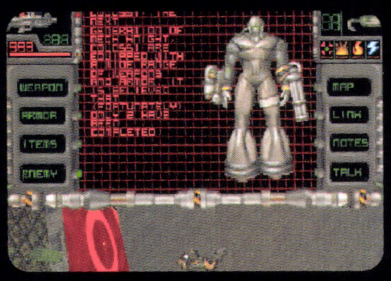
Now available for Windows® 95.
Download demo at
www.takenoprisoners.com

TAKE NO PRISONERS™

Top-Down 3D Action from the Creators of Hexen™



6 unique multiplayer games for up to 8 players, including Assassin, Arsenal and Stockpile.



22 twisted enemies, each with unique combat behavior, plus 21 bone-shredding weapons.



20 non-linear territories: no set path; explore ahead before completing previous levels.



RAVEN™ S·O·F·T·W·A·R·E

REDORB entertainment

MATURE™ M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

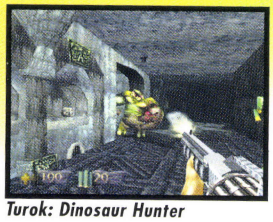
©1997 Broderbund Software, Inc. Red Orb Entertainment, Take No Prisoners, and the logos are trademarks of Broderbund Software, Inc. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the properties of their respective owners.



These games included:



Moto Racer



Turok: Dinosaur Hunter



Longbow FX

Now Get Arcade Thrills from a PC Graphics Card!

Putting an Intense 3D Voodoo graphics card in your PC is like getting a coin-op 3D game arcade. With 3Dfx Interactive's Voodoo Rush technology, Intense 3D Voodoo delivers everything you want in a game card...super 3D acceleration, 2D acceleration, DVD support, NTSC and PAL output to television...and more!

Enhances More Games!

3Dfx Voodoo Rush technology is the popular standard and is widely supported among game developers. In fact, more than 150 new *3Dfx supported games are expected to be available by the end of this year!*

Put an Arcade in Your PC!

Don't miss the arcade fun. Buy Intense 3D Voodoo now from your local computer retailer!



Intense 3D Voodoo delivers arcade-quality 3D graphics on *your* PC.

INTERGRAPH
COMPUTER SYSTEMS

www.intergraph.com

Intergraph and the Intergraph logo are registered trademarks and Intense 3D and the Intense 3D Voodoo logo are trademarks of Intergraph Corporation. Electronic Arts is a registered trademark and EA is a trademark of Electronic Arts. Jane's is a registered trademark of Jane's Information Group, Ltd. used under license. Moto Racer is a trademark of Delphine Software International. TUROK is a registered trademark of GBPC, a subsidiary of Golden Books Family Entertainment. Acclaim is a registered trademark of Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. 3Dfx, the 3Dfx logo, Voodoo Graphics and Voodoo Rush are trademarks of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. Windows is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Other brands and product names are trademarks of their respective owners. Copyright 1997 Intergraph Corporation, Huntsville, AL 35894-0001. MC 970659 9/97